

choices; they have consolidated power, eviscerated the role of the parliament, and allowed corruption and cronyism to corrode the government.

Indeed, over the past few years, as our foreign policy attention has shifted eastward, towards hotspots in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, we have been dangerously negligent of Haiti's continuing political dissolution and Aristide's failed leadership.

I believe that the current violent expression of political opposition, which has taken the lives of over 40 Haitians in the past two weeks, derives directly from the Haitians' frustration with their government. Haitian political rights have been chipped away since Aristide's 2000 re-election, based on only five percent voter turnout, created a political stalemate. The Haitian parliament has since stopped functioning, prompting international aid donors to block millions of dollars in needed economic aid.

The resulting economic situation is bleak. Most of Haiti's 8 million people live on less than \$1 per day and it ranks 150th out of 175 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index.

But Aristide's government has exacerbated Haiti's economic crisis. The U.S. State Department classified the country's current situation as "economic stagnation" caused by ineffective economic policies, political instability, environmental deterioration, the lack of a functioning judiciary, and the migration of skilled workers.

On the other hand, we know that this month's violent outburst is not the only means for Haitians to express political opposition. For years, legitimate opposition groups have opposed Aristide's government and most of them do not condone today's violence. Instead they endorse new elections and a peaceful transition of power.

We have a unique obligation to stand up for the people of Haiti. Our two countries are inextricably linked—by the virtue of our similar histories, because of our involvement in Aristide's return to power, and as a result of the influx of Haitians who have come to our shores seeking refuge from the economically and politically ravaged country. These Haitian Americans have contributed greatly to American life and I am proud to have a talented young man of Haitian origins on my staff and to represent nearly 60,000 Haitian Americans in my State.

The Bush administration has advocated for a negotiated political solution to the crisis. Yesterday, Southern Command has dispatched a small military team to Haiti to provide the ambassador and the embassy staff with an enhanced capability to monitor the current situation. Secretary of State Colin Powell recently met with regional officials and the Canadian and Haitian ambassadors to discuss a possible Caribbean-Canadian police force for Haiti. I support the State Department in its efforts to forge a negotiated political solution brought about

by dialogue, negotiation, and compromise and fully support the power sharing agreement put forth by Secretary Powell and international community. I urge the opposition groups to accept this proposal to share power with Aristide until he can be replaced democratically.

I also ask my colleagues to follow this crisis closely and to join me in demanding that President Bush, Secretary Powell and other foreign policy advisors continue to play a leading role, facilitating negotiations between the Haitian government and the opposition factions.

If the opposition accepts the power-sharing agreement, Secretary Powell should enlist French, United Nations, and Caricom help to see that forceful diplomatic intervention ends the current stand-off. The next step is for the U.S., in concert with international organizations, to assist Haiti in creating a unity government, a council of advisors and the installation of a new prime minister. American diplomacy and influence can be effectively mustered to convince both Aristide and the opposition to accept these reformist measures.

U.S. hegemony, wealth, and power have, over the course of our country's history, generated myriad international obligations to resolve global conflicts and preserve peace and security. Our responsibilities emerge no clearer than when conflicts arise in our own neighborhood. It is time to break with a recent policy of U.S. dismissal and neglect regarding Haiti's self-destructive government and devastating economic situation.

I urge my colleagues to join with me in insisting that the administration, with Congressional support, rise to fulfill the responsibilities of global leadership.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SPC BILLY JESS WATTS

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President. I express our Nation's deepest thanks and gratitude to a young man and his family from Meeteetse, WY. On February 5, 2004, SPC Billy Jess Watts was killed in the line of duty while preparing to deploy to Iraq to serve his country in the war on terrorism. While traveling in a military convoy to a final training exercise before leaving for duty in Operation Iraqi Freedom, SPC Watts died when the vehicle he was riding in hit ice and rolled over.

SPC Watts was a member of the Wyoming Army National Guard's 2-300 Field Artillery Battalion. He enjoyed the outdoors, hunting and camping, and loved watching NASCAR racing and pitching horseshoes. He loved his family and his country. SPC Watts' profound sense of duty led him to join the U.S. Army following his high school graduation, and the National Guard upon his return to Wyoming. He was an American soldier.

It is because of people like Billy Watts that we continue to live safe and

secure. America's men and women who answer the call of service and wear our Nation's uniform deserve respect and recognition for the enormous burden that they willingly bear. Our people put everything on the line everyday, and because of these folks, our Nation remains free and strong in the face of danger.

SPC Watts is survived by his wife Connie and his son Austin John, as well as parents, Bill and Bertha, sisters Bonnie, Betty and Barbara, and his brothers in arms of the 2-300 Field Artillery Battalion. We say goodbye to a husband, a father, a son, a brother, a soldier, and an American. Our Nation pays its deepest respect to SPC Billy Jess Watts for his courage, his love of country and his sacrifice, so that we may remain free. He was a hero in life and he remains a hero in death. All of Wyoming, and indeed the entire Nation are proud of him.

2LT LUKE S. JAMES

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, you don't have to do much more than open the morning newspaper or turn on the evening news to understand that the enemies of freedom are working hard in Iraq.

They lay ambushes for our troops, set off bombs by remote control, and drive explosive-laden autos into crowds of innocent Iraqis who want nothing more than a brighter future for their country and their children.

Terrorists connected with al-Qaida, foreign interests and Baathist loyalists conspire to destroy the dream of a free Iraq before it is fully born. They will fail.

But Saddam Hussein, a one-man weapon of mass destruction who preyed on his countrymen and threatened his neighbors, is in custody. His murderous sons are dead. His lieutenants and henchmen are captured, killed, or moving nearer those fates with each passing hour.

The same fates await those who would steal the dream of liberty and replace it with a nightmare of repression, corruption and domination. America's front line in her war against terrorism is now in the fields of Afghanistan and the streets of Iraq instead of in the skies over New York and Washington, DC.

Like Americans everywhere, I was thrilled to see the statues of Saddam Hussein knocked from their pedestals. Those images reminded me that the Iraqi people needed our help, our tanks, our troops, and our commitment to topple a brutal dictator. I am proud of our military and America's commitment to make the people of the Middle East more free and secure.

Without a doubt, our military men and women will face more difficult days in Iraq, and the Iraqi people will be tested by the responsibilities that come with freedom. Everyone expects more violence. Freedom is messy—nowhere more so than in a country that has just shaken off a brutal dictatorship.

Today I rise to honor who made the ultimate sacrifice one can make for his country.

A few days ago I stood in Arlington National Cemetery to honor the memory of 2LT Luke S. James.

Lieutenant James, 24, was a native of Hooker, OK, and a graduate of Oklahoma State University. He was killed in Iraq on January 27 during a roadside ambush near Iskandariyah.

Lieutenant James was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 505th Infantry out of Fort Bragg, NC. He'd only been in Iraq a few days.

Our prayers and debt of appreciation now go to his family. He is survived here on the homefront by his wife Molly, his 6-month-old son, Bradley, his parents Brad and Arleen James, his sister Sharla, and his brother Kirby.

"That was his dream (to serve in the Army)," Molly James said in a recent interview. "He wasn't afraid to go. He was able to do his duty and die with honor."

As we watch the dawn of a new day in Iraq, we must never forget that the freedom we enjoy every day in America is bought at a price.

2LT Luke James did not die in vain. He died so that many others could live freely. And for that sacrifice, we are forever indebted. Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family and with the troops who are putting their lives on the line in Iraq.

CONTROL AND DISPOSAL OF RADIOACTIVE SOURCES

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise today to express my concern that the threat posed by the detonation of a "dirty bomb" has not been adequately addressed. Controlling access to the radioactive materials needed to fabricate such a weapon remains a challenge today, just as it did in the days immediately following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Security improvements have been slow to come. Dirty bombs continue to threaten the people and the economy of the United States.

Radioactive sealed sources are all around us. They are used widely in medicine, research, industry, and agriculture. Some of these sources are more risky than others, and Congress must take action to ensure the control and safe disposal of those sources that pose the greatest risk. These sources, known as "greater-than-Class-C" sealed sources, are of major concern because of their potential for use in the fabrication of a dirty bomb.

To address this risk, I introduced S. 1045, the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Act of 2003, this past May. My bill addresses the efforts made by the Department of Energy, DOE, to recover and dispose of thousands of domestic greater-than-Class-C radiological sources. This measure was developed after three different U.S. General Accounting Office reports I requested showed that the efforts being made by DOE and

other Federal agencies to control and dispose of these radioactive sources, both domestically and internationally, have not gone far enough.

Provisions of S. 1045 were included in H.R. 6, the Energy Policy Act of 2003, but as debate over the energy bill continues, radioactive sources remain a threat to our country. Over the holidays, there was a serious concern about the possible detonation of a dirty bomb at one of the large open-air New Year's Eve celebrations around the country. The DOE took serious and prudent action to detect possible terrorist activities and thankfully this situation did not end in tragedy. However, next time we may not be so lucky. The lack of a safe, secure, and permanent disposal site for unwanted radioactive sealed sources places our country at risk.

Thousands of sealed sources await disposal, some requiring security measures greater than those in place at current storage facilities. The problem posed by these sources will not go away by itself. Universities and industry do not have the means or facilities to secure these materials and are seeking Federal Government assistance. In my own State, the University of Hawaii is currently seeking the assistance of the DOE to remove large unwanted radioactive sources, belonging to DOE, that are no longer useful for their research. While DOE is working on a solution, the sources remain in Hawaii awaiting disposal. My bill would require the DOE to fulfill their statutory obligation to develop a disposal facility for all of these sources, in consultation with Congress, and would also require that DOE explore Federal and non-Federal alternative disposal options to make sure that the best disposal method is chosen.

However, my concern over radioactive material does not end here. I will continue my work to improve Federal oversight of radioactive sources and devices. Just a few weeks ago in New Jersey, a gauge containing radioactive material was damaged, and its radioactive material is still missing. Creating a disposal facility for this class of radioactive waste is only the beginning of getting this problem under control. We need to improve the licensing and tracking of these widely used sources and devices, so that they will not fall into the wrong hands.

When the United States began non-proliferation efforts in the former Soviet Union, one of the first jobs was to begin consolidating nuclear weapons and fissile materials in secure facilities to await disposal or destruction. Due to worries about terrorists acquiring dirty bombs, the DOE is now working to secure radiological sources in many countries overseas. I support these efforts. A theft this month of cesium-137 in China re-emphasizes the need to work with other countries to collect and dispose of unwanted radiological materials. The cesium, stolen by scrap metal thieves, ended up being melted by a steel mill. The mill is now con-

taminated and will have to undergo expensive clean-up efforts. While this type of incident is less likely to happen in the U.S., we must learn from this, and take steps to protect our nation from these materials. We should take the lead in helping other nations secure their radioactive material, for the good of us all.

The bill that I introduced and which is cosponsored by Senators BINGAMAN and LANDRIEU, will give radiological sources and waste on American soil a safe and secure, permanent disposal facility. Before September 11, 2001, collecting and securing these sources was a matter of public safety, now it is a national security concern that demands the attention of Congress. I urge my colleagues to support the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Act of 2003, to ensure that our nation is better protected from the dangers of dirty bombs.

LESSONS FROM A CLEAN AIR LISTENING TOUR

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I have spoken many times about my serious concern for our Nation's deteriorating air quality. I would like to speak today on behalf of those Americans who are working tirelessly at the regional and local levels to protect our air quality, and who have expressed their concerns to me. Many Americans across the country feel that the Clean Air Act has not done enough to protect their health and their environment. They also worry that, under the leadership of our President, things will only get worse. They are taking action at the local and State levels, and State government is responding with real leadership. We need to support these actions with strong, Federal legislation to protect our current laws and improve our air quality.

On a nationwide Clean Air Listening Tour I initiated in 2003, I heard firsthand from Americans who are tired of getting sick from breathing dirty air, and tired of putting their children's health at risk from eating mercury-contaminated fish. In Asheville, NC, and in Boston, MA, the public demands that the Federal Government work immediately to clean their air.

Asheville is situated in close proximity to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the most visited National Park in the Nation at nine million visitors every year. Sadly, this majestic park is also the Nation's most polluted, as reported by the National Parks Conservation Association. Its visibility is tied for the worst with Mammoth Cave National Park, at a mere 14-mile range during the summer months. Under natural conditions, the vista should average around 80-miles.

The Smokies have the highest rate of acid precipitation among the parks, at thirty-five kilograms per hectare. This is six to seven times the nitrogen pollution that local soils can process. In fact, the highest peak in the Smokies can be as acidic as vinegar.