

incumbent upon all of us, I trust, to get this bill to a conference between the House and the Senate, work out our differences so we can vote on a conference report and allow this underlying bill now changed to get to our President's desk.

Having said that, let me thank everyone for the work they have done. This is a very busy schedule. But let me also echo what the minority leader said. It does not stop other Members who feel they must offer amendments from bringing those to the floor. I said early on today we wanted an open process, amendments voted on, but at the end of the day we wanted to vote on final passage. We helped facilitate that by this agreement, and I appreciate the work done by our leaders.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I was just reminded by floor staff that the Reed amendment is, in fact, the McCain-Reed amendment. I ask consent that the agreement we just reached be so modified.

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

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

The Democratic whip.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I feel constrained to say that we have been in a quorum call now for 4 hours 10 minutes, but that does not take away from the fact that people have been working very hard during this entire period of time, plus earlier this day. I personally extend my appreciation to the two leaders, the Republican leader and the Democratic leader, for working with us. Senator FRIST is not on the floor tonight. We have been in constant contact with him during the evening.

I also want to say that Senator REED, my counterpart from Rhode Island, has been representing those people who are extremely concerned about this issue, probably 12, 15 Senators. He has been extremely helpful, as he always is. He has represented his cause in the most efficient way. Without his cooperation and work, Senator DASCHLE and I could not be at the point where we are today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

REPORT PURSUANT TO WAR POWERS RESOLUTION

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the attached report from the President of the United States be printed in the RECORD, consistent with the War Powers Resolution.

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

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, February 25, 2004.

Hon. TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore of the Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: Increasing armed rebellion in Haiti, the limited effectiveness of the Haitian National Police, and insecurity in Port-au-Prince brought on by increased armed pro-government gang activity have contributed to a climate of insecurity for the U.S. Embassy and its supporting facilities in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. These circumstances and the potential for further deterioration of the security environment in Haiti render the safety of the U.S. Embassy, its facilities, and U.S. personnel uncertain.

On February 23, 2004, a security force of approximately 55 U.S. military personnel from the U.S. Joint Forces Command deployed to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to augment the Embassy security forces.

Although the U.S. forces are equipped for combat, this movement was undertaken solely for the purpose of protecting American citizens and property. It is anticipated that U.S. forces will provide this support until such time as it is determined that the security situation has stabilized and the threat to the Embassy, its facilities, and U.S. personnel has ended.

I have taken this action pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH.

CONGRATULATING VIRGINIA SCHUYLER

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to congratulate Virginia Schuyler, a woman from my hometown of Aberdeen, SD, who has dedicated her life to helping those in need. Virginia is the recipient of South Dakota's 2003 Outstanding Older Worker Award, an honor bestowed by Experience Works, an organization committed to improving the lives of seniors in South Dakota through quality job training and employment programs.

Virginia decided early on that she wanted to be a nurse. From a very young age, Virginia knew she wanted to travel. When her mother told her that nurses travel on boats and planes, her mind was made up. For 60 years she has been a registered nurse, and she has traveled all over the world. For the past 5 years, Virginia, 81, has cared for residents at the Bethesda Towne Square, an assisted living facility. The residents there deeply appreciate her dedication—she insists on working every weekend—as well as everything she does for them, activities that range from bringing them hot tea at night to painting stained-glass windows for the residents in her spare time.

Virginia earned an RN degree in 1943. She joined the U.S. Army, serving in England, France, and Germany, and recalls treating as many as 500 patients

daily from the Normandy invasion in France. After her discharge from the Army, she stayed in Germany, where her volunteer work at an orphanage led her to adopt two children who were on the brink of starvation. In 1954, she earned an RN in Pathology degree, the equivalent of a master's degree, from St. Joseph's Hospital in Burbank, CA.

After she earned her pathology degree, Virginia worked in pathology for 7 years at St. Joseph's Hospital, and at St. Luke's Hospital in Aberdeen for 25 years. She also spent 5 years working with Alzheimer's patients at Arcadia in Aberdeen. Today, in addition to her work at Bethesda Towne Square, Virginia works between 30 and 50 hours a week on her stained-glass window business, and acts as her church secretary.

I join Virginia's many admirers in congratulating her on receiving this prestigious and well-deserved award.

TAIWAN

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, over recent months, aggressive rhetoric has escalated across the Taiwan Strait. In response to Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian's pledge to hold a nationwide referendum "to demand that the Taiwan Strait issue be resolved through peaceful means," Chinese officials have threatened the use of force. Prime Minister Wen Jiabao of the People's Republic of China has stated that China will "crush" any attempts by Taiwan to seek independence and that it will "pay any price to safeguard the unity of the motherland." In addition on November 20, 2003, PRC Major General Wang Zaixi was quoted saying that "the use of force may become unavoidable" in dealing with Taiwan. On February 11, 2004, Chinese officials stated the referendum would "provoke confrontation."

Threats of violence by the People's Republic of China only undermine efforts to resolve longstanding China-Taiwan tensions. Intimidation and warnings of bloodshed have taken the place of constructive dialogue. I fear that these threats will only intensify as Taiwan's presidential elections on March 20, 2004, draw nearer.

In the midst of this bellicose rhetoric, I express my support for the people of Taiwan and to compliment the Taiwanese people and their leadership for the great strides they have made in strengthening their democracy. Since 2000, with the first peaceful transfer of power from one political party to another in Taiwan's history, Taiwan's democracy has thrived. The U.S. State Department's annual Human Rights Reports for 2002 reported that the government of Taiwan largely respected the independence of both the judiciary and press in practice and stated, "Taiwan's strides were also notable, with consolidation and improvement of civil liberties catching up to its free and open electoral system." Transparency International has ranked Taiwan's

economy as one of the five least corrupt in Asia; and Freedom House labeled Taiwan "free" in 2003 with an improvement in political rights since 2002. President Chen Shui-bian has also demonstrated a commitment to human rights and is credited with solidifying a place for human rights within Taiwanese society during his presidency. The Human Rights Advisory Committee, established by Chen in 2000, is currently in the process of creating a National Human Rights Commission that will serve as the highest institution in Taiwan for the protection and promotion of human rights.

I remain committed to protecting the civil and political rights of the people of Taiwan, and I support Taiwan's inclusion in international organizations, such as in the World Health Organization, WHO. The recent SARS and avian flu outbreaks highlight the importance of giving the people of Taiwan a voice in these organizations. I agree with claims by Taiwanese authorities that it is inhumane for the international community to deny the people of Taiwan access to WHO's medical data and assistance. Unfortunately, despite congressional efforts, Taiwan has still not been granted observer status. This should change in the coming year.

I fear that provocative statements will have dangerous repercussions in this region of the world. Rather than warn and provoke, I hope that the governments of China and Taiwan will engage in a more constructive dialogue and encourage increased cross-strait people to people linkages. I support a peaceful resolution to the Taiwan-China situation, and I will continue to support policies that keep cross-strait tensions in check.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. On May 1, 2003, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, a bill that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable to our society.

Last fall in Portland, ME, Joshua Nisbet pulled up in a car near a bar that caters to the gay community. Nisbet and a friend yelled an antigay slur at two men walking nearby and assaulted them.

I believe that Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law we can change hearts and minds as well.

PETER VLČKO, HUMANITARIAN

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I note with sadness the passing of Peter

Vlčko, a hero for all of humanity. When immense love and bravery coalesce in one person, as they did in Mr. Vlčko, amazing things are bound to happen.

And they did.

Mr. Vlčko's love for humankind manifested itself in his brave fight against evils such as totalitarianism, fascism, and anti-Semitism. During the dark days of World War II, at huge and constant risk to his own life, he fought against the pro-German Slovak Government and rescued over 20 Jews from deportation and death by the Nazis.

His heroic efforts have not gone unnoticed. Among other awards and recognitions, in 1981, Mr. Vlčko received the Silver Medal for Righteous Gentiles from Israel. With descendants of the Jews he saved looking on, he stood witness as a tree was planted in his honor at the top of a hill in Jerusalem. His name has also been forever memorialized in a large granite relief in the Garden of the Righteous at the Holocaust Memorial center in West Bloomfield.

Born in a Slovak village in 1912, Mr. Vlčko volunteered for military service immediately upon completion of his secondary education. He rose quickly through the ranks until the invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia by the German military in 1939 forced him to be disarmed and reassigned to a war college in Bratislava. He took a break from his studies to serve a tour of duty on the Russian front, but his service was cut short when he sustained shrapnel wounds and an injury to his left leg from the heavy mortar fire. Returning to his studies, he met his future wife, Georgina Reichsfeld.

The strict anti-Semitic laws could not deter his love for Georgina, who was of Jewish ancestry. At a risk to Mr. Vlčko's life, the two entered into wedlock.

As the danger to his young bride and her family mounted, he hid them until he could obtain false identification papers. His perilous efforts did not stop with his bride's family. He continued on, obtaining false papers for twenty other Jews, which identified them as "essential personnel," preventing certain deportation and death.

Summoning more courage still, Mr. Vlčko offered his assistance to an attempt to overthrow the Nazi-friendly regime in Slovakia. Through a variety of disguises, such as a shoemaker and a woman, Mr. Vlčko managed to evade German forces and twice to escape capture. Forced into hiding for the remainder of the war, he was separated from his family for a year when he escaped into Bavaria.

Once reunited, Mr. Vlčko and his family immigrated to the United States, where they began a new life in Michigan. After attending a community college, he went to work for Ford Motor Company.

His new surroundings, however, could not make him forget his violent past. Through his narrative, he tried to edu-

cate people on the horrors of fascism and anti-Semitism. To do so, he both lectured throughout the United States and Canada and published an 860-page autobiography. People needed to know and, thanks to him, we do.

In 1991, Mr. Vlčko was granted honorary Israeli citizenship, and both he and his wife regained their Czechoslovakia citizenship, which was taken from them when they fled Czechoslovakia after the Communists seized power in the 1948 coup. In fact, he had been living under a death sentence issued by the Czech government until 1989. He has been honored by the Czech President and Czech Minister of Defense and has often been the guest of honor of the Czech and Slovak Ambassadors to the United States.

Mr. Vlčko is survived by his wife, Georgina, and their four children. Despite what severe images a background as a soldier might evoke, his wife affectionately describes the full picture: "He loved his family very much and worked his whole life to keep them safe."

Mr. Vlčko left behind more than a family, however; he left behind a legacy of love and hope embodied in the children of the Jews he saved and an outstanding example of courage and decency in the face of darkness and tyranny.

It is that legacy that I am sure will surround him as he rests in peace.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING THE SERVICE OF BRENDA COWAN

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I would like to take the opportunity to honor the service of Ms. Brenda Cowan, originally of Sturgis, KY. Her death while performing her duty as a firefighter is a great loss to us all.

On February 13, 2004 Brenda was responding to a domestic violence call. Tragically, Brenda and the person she was trying to help were shot and killed while waiting for police to arrive on the scene.

Her service with the Lexington, KY fire department was exemplary and duly appreciated. Brenda was also a pioneer. She was the first African American woman to become a firefighter in Lexington. As one of the U.S. Senators from Kentucky, I know that Brenda served as a fine example of what it means to serve one's community.

We are humbled and honored by the sacrifice Brenda has made. Without men and women such as Brenda, America would not be as great as it is now. Lexington and Kentucky are truly lucky to have benefited from her fine service. She is an example to us all. •

HONORING SY AND ESTELLE OPPER

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am pleased to note that Sy and Estelle