

for the White House. Despite the restrictions placed on the non-governmental organizations attempting to go into Darfur, on April 21, the President certified the government of Sudan had not unreasonably interfered with humanitarian efforts. Making the law more explicit may prevent another such mistake.

Finally, we should add a requirement that our permanent representative to the U.N. Security Council pursue a Security Council Resolution condemning the government of Sudan for its actions in Darfur, and calling for accountability for those who are found responsible for orchestrating and carrying out the atrocities.

Mr. President, the administration has said that it will not attempt to secure the north-south peace agreement at the expense of the people in Darfur. I agree. In fact, a north-south agreement will be meaningless in the face of ethnic cleansing in western Sudan. I believe that we must ratchet up the pressure on the Government of Sudan, and our partners in the international community to bring an end to the criminal acts of the government in Khartoum.

RIISING COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I rise to comment as well on another matter closer to home.

It is graduation season. Over the next several weeks, in cities and towns in South Dakota and across America, hundreds of thousands of young people will graduate from high school.

Parents will tell their graduating sons and daughters, "I'm proud of you."

Unfortunately, many parents will also have to tell their children, "I'm sorry."

"I'm sorry that we can't afford to send you to college."

The novelist James Michener grew up dirt poor in Pennsylvania, but he got a good education.

He once told an interviewer, "I went to nine different universities and never paid a nickel of my own money. My wife got many scholarships. We are children of the United States."

James Michener was able to graduate from college because America invested in him. In his case, it was the GI bill that opened the doors of higher education.

In my own case, it was the Air Force ROTC that opened those doors.

I was the first person in my family ever to go to college. I worked to pay part of my tuition, and my parents helped; my mother went back to work when I was in high school just to help pay for my college education.

Even with all of us pitching in, I still could not have paid for college without help from the United States Government.

I am deeply mindful of, and grateful for, the investment America made in

me. It is partly because of my own background that I am troubled today to see many families in America priced out—or on the verge of being priced out—of the college market.

Since President Bush took office, the average tuition at a 4-year public college has increased 28 percent.

This year, tuition increased at State universities in all 50 States. In some States, tuition shot up as much as 40 percent. And more increases are slated for next year.

The University of Kentucky is raising tuition for freshmen and sophomores by \$618 next year. That is a 14-percent increase—on top of this year's 14-percent increase.

The University of Missouri will see a 7.5-percent tuition increase next year—on top of this year's increase of 20 percent.

In Texas, the University of Houston recently raised tuition by 25 percent. The University of Texas at Austin plans a 26-percent increase. And Texas A&M University will charge students 21 percent more.

In Washington State, community college tuition is going up 7 percent, bringing the total increase over the past 5 years to more than 35 percent.

In California, where budget cuts and tuition increases this year shut an estimated 175,000 students out of community colleges, State lawmakers are now considering a 44-percent increase in community college fees; that would be on top of last year's 64-percent increase.

They are also looking at a 10-percent tuition increase for University of California students and a 9-percent budget cut for the Cal State system.

At the same time tuition is increasing dramatically, the value of the Pell Grant, America's main college tuition assistance program, is declining.

In 1979, the maximum Pell Grant covered 77 percent of the tuition at a 4-year public college or university. By 2001, that percentage had dropped to just 42 percent.

Today, the average college student needs to come up with \$3,800 per year out-of-pocket—that's after grants and loans.

Most college students today work. In fact, more than three-quarters of all full-time students at public colleges and universities work, and they work an average of 22 hours per week. Yet student debt has doubled over the last decade.

Students graduating from college this month will leave school with \$17,000-worth of student loan debt; that's for undergraduate students. Professional and graduate students often graduate with \$100,000—or more—in student loan debt. And they are luckier than some.

The rise in college costs is outpacing the ability of many low-income families to pay for college. At 4-year public colleges, tuition costs for the lowest 20 percent of wage earners rose from 12 percent of family income in 1980 to 25 percent of family income in 2002.

At 4-year private colleges, tuition costs for low-wage earners rose from 58 percent of family income in 1980 to 117 percent of family income in 2002.

And according to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, in the fall of 2003, at least 250,000 prospective college students were priced out of the college market. They had the grades to go to college; they just couldn't afford the tuition.

When I graduated from high school, a college education was a big advantage. Today, it is rapidly becoming a necessity. The fastest-growing and best-paying jobs today require at least some college.

Over the course of his or her career, a person with a 2-year college degree will earn an average of \$400,000 more than a high school graduate. Someone with a 4-year degree will earn nearly \$1 million more.

But it is not just individuals who suffer when middle- and lower-income Americans are priced out of college. Our entire Nation suffers. Broad access to higher education is critical to America's economic future, our national security, our intellectual and cultural life, and our democracy.

There was a story on the front page of the New York Times on Monday that ought to alarm us all. The headline read: "U.S. is Losing Its Dominance in the Sciences."

It said:

The United States has started to lose its worldwide dominance in critical areas of science and innovation, according to federal and private experts who point to strong evidence like prizes awarded to Americans and the number of papers in major professional journals. . . .

Foreign advances in basic science now often rival or even exceed America's. . . .

It quoted John Jankowski, a senior analyst at the National Science Foundation, saying:

The rest of the world is catching up. Science excellence is no longer the domain of just the U.S.

The article cited three statistics to support that claim:

First, in international competition involving industrial patents, the percentage won by Americans "has fallen steadily over the decades and now stands at 52 percent."

Second, the percentage of research papers by Americans published in top physics journals has declined from 61 percent in 1983 to just 29 percent this year.

Finally, the share of Nobel Prizes for science won by Americans has fallen to 51 percent. These are prizes America dominated heavily from the 1960s well into the 1990s.

Unless we reverse this decline and regain America's scientific and technological edge, our children will grow up in a less productive, less prosperous America.

If we are going to meet the challenges of the future, we need the best thinking and best efforts of every American. Yet the doors to college are narrowing.

What has the administration's response to this problem been?

Deafening silence.

The Higher Education Act is up for reauthorization. Yet this administration has put forward no real plan to make college more affordable.

The Bush administration has stood by while States have slashed their education budgets and raised college tuition to close State budget shortfalls.

The President's oversized tax cuts have eaten up Federal resources that we could otherwise invest in higher education, and in basic research and investment.

Despite his repeated promises to increase the value of the average Pell Grant, the President's proposed budget for next year freezes the Pell Grant for the third year in a row.

The President's budget also cuts the Perkins Loan program—the Federal work-study program that has helped tens of millions of middle- and lower-income students work their way through college.

I hope we can come up with a better answer, and many of us have proposed one.

We believe the Government can, and must, create an opportunity society, where every college-ready student or worker who needs to update his or her skills has the chance to go to college, or get additional training, without having to take on back-breaking debt to do it.

We want to increase the maximum Pell Grant from \$4,050 to \$5,100, to double the HOPE Scholarship tax credit from \$1,500 per student to \$3,000 per student, and to make the education tax credits refundable.

We also support efforts to help more African American, Hispanic, Native American, and other minority students attend college, because diversity strengthens our democracy and our economy.

James Michener fought in World War II. He helped win perhaps the greatest battle of the last century.

Americans in the 21st century will fight different battles. But the stakes are just as high.

We need to make sure that every son and daughter of America has the chance to go to college if he or she can do the work. It is not just a matter of individual self-interest. In a real sense, it is a matter of our national survival.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 90 minutes, with the first half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee, and the second half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

The Senator from Indiana is recognized.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I will use 8 minutes.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is recognized for 8 minutes.

DIPLOMATIC NOMINEES

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I rise to address the body this morning on the importance of Senate action to confirm pending nominations for ambassadorial and other foreign affairs posts.

Together, Republicans and Democrats on the Foreign Relations Committee have worked to move nominations as expeditiously as possible. During the past few weeks, the committee has held hearings and considered nominations for more than 30 such posts. As a group, these nominees received bipartisan support. Our members voted unanimously in favor of confirmation of each one at a business meeting last Thursday.

I was pleased last night when the Senate confirmed Paul Applegarth to be chief executive officer of the Millennium Challenge Corporation. I appreciate the work of Senator FRIST and Senator DASCHLE to move this important nomination. The launch of the Millennium Challenge Corporation presents an important opportunity for the United States to enhance the effectiveness of its development assistance. Last year, Congress appropriated \$1 billion for the MCC, and having a chief executive officer in place and ready to provide leadership in this new enterprise is a vital first step to ensuring its success.

I hope the Senate will now move with some dispatch on the rest of the pending diplomatic nominees. The posts for which these individuals have been nominated hold great importance for our country. A few examples will illustrate that point.

Among the nominees pending before the Senate is that of John Negroponte to be U.S. Ambassador to Iraq. As I said at Ambassador Negroponte's nomination hearing, the post will be one of the most consequential ambassadorships in American history. The Ambassador to Iraq not only will be called upon to lead an estimated 1,700 embassy personnel—that is, 1,000 Americans and 700 Iraqis—he will be the epicenter of international efforts to secure and reconstruct Iraq and provide the developing Iraqi government with the opportunity to achieve responsible nationhood.

American credibility in the world, progress in the war on terrorism, relationships with our allies, and the future of the Middle East depend on a positive outcome in Iraq. What happens there during the next 18 months almost certainly will determine whether we can begin to redirect the Middle East toward a more productive and peaceful future.

The stakes for the United States in achieving success in Iraq could not be higher.

I understand there is leadership activity that may make it possible for the ambassadorship of John

Negroponte to be considered by the Senate very soon. I very much appreciate that effort.

The pending nominees also include individuals to be ambassadors to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone, each of which is struggling in the aftermath of ethnic conflict. They include nominees to be ambassadors to Poland, Romania, and Slovenia, at a time when these countries are joining the European Union and looking to deepen their ties to the United States. They include nominees to be ambassadors to Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen at a time when the United States must improve its relations and encourage democracy and reform in the greater Middle East. They include also nominees to be ambassadors to important regional anchors, such as Brazil, Nigeria, South Africa, and South Korea.

The ambassadorial nominees currently awaiting Senate confirmation would represent the United States in countries with a collective population of more than 700 million people.

Foreign governments notice when U.S. ambassadorships to their countries go unfilled for lengthy periods of time. An ambassadorial absence can be read by some nations as a sign of declining American interest. The United States needs strong and effective diplomatic representation abroad to ensure cooperation in the fight against terrorism, to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to build trade and investment relationships that will strengthen our economy and advance freedom and democracy worldwide.

We also must remember that ambassadorships function not only as representation of the United States, but as managers of their embassies. Given that U.S. diplomatic missions have been terrorist targets and remain the most visible American symbol in many countries with a terrorist presence, we need leadership at these embassies. Needless depriving an embassy of its ambassador in a time of terrorist threat may have consequences as grave as depriving a military unit of its commander in time of conflict.

Over the years, the Senate generally has done its duty to efficiently move ambassadorial nominees. We should proceed carefully and thoughtfully when we evaluate diplomatic nominations. But we should proceed with dispatch. Nominations must not be delayed by inattention, bureaucratic arguments, or political motivations, and when our examinations are complete, we should send the nominees to their post as quickly as possible.

I am confident the Senate understands the importance of confirming nominees who will be on the front lines of efforts to advance U.S. interests around the world, and I ask all Members to join the Foreign Relations Committee in moving these nominees. I thank the Chair.