

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF U.N. CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise today to mark the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Since its adoption on June 17th, 1994, some 190 countries, including the United States, have become party to the convention. But for those looking for reasons to celebrate on this tenth anniversary, the news on desertification is not good at all. Indeed, the scope and pace of desertification have increased over the last two decades. In some parts of the world, the rate of desertification has doubled since the 1970s. By 2025, according to the United Nations, two-thirds of the arable land in Africa will be gone.

Today, desertification threatens an astonishing one-third of the earth's land surface, directly affecting over 250 million people and threatening the livelihoods of some 1.2 billion more. Most of these people live in the world's poorest countries, caught in a vicious cycle of accelerating poverty and environmental degradation. Disruptions associated with climate change will likely make things worse.

No one has to be reminded of how important fertile soil has been to human societies. But what can take centuries to form can be eroded or blown away in a matter of years. Loss of arable land directly undermines food security, displacing large numbers of people, creating new opportunities for sickness and disease, and, in some cases, contributing to famine. These sorts of pressures also work to exacerbate political instability in so-called weak states.

Indeed, the links between desertification and security are increasingly apparent, as recognized by a recent NATO workshop on the issue. It is high time that policy makers in the United States take these linkages seriously.

But it is also high time to recognize that desertification is fundamentally a humanitarian issue. We cannot remain indifferent while millions suffer from the effects of desertification. This was the impetus that drove the international community to negotiate and adopt a formal convention ten years ago. As we mark the tenth anniversary of the convention, we would do well to remember this and to acknowledge that we must redouble our efforts to combat this global environmental problem.

Unfortunately, the United States has so far failed to play a leading role in the global effort to combat desertification. Although we finally became a party to the convention in 2000, we have never been especially active. I urge the current administration to step up and take a more active role in the convention. Without active participation and leadership by the United States, the effectiveness of international efforts to combat desertification will be limited at best.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF DAVID GRUENWALD

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I pay tribute and congratulate David Gruenwald of Owensboro, KY on being named a distinguished finalist for the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. This award honors young people in middle level and high school grades for outstanding volunteer service to their communities.

David Gruenwald has proven himself to be an ideal volunteer. While he is only 14 years old, he has already done more volunteer work than many people will do in their whole life. As a project to become an Eagle Scout, David started a book drive for inmates at the Daviess County Detention Center. He went above the call of duty and began to enlist his classmates at Owensboro Catholic Middle School. Soon they had increased the size of the facility's library from about 30 books to 2,900.

The citizens of Owensboro are fortunate to have a young man like David Gruenwald in their community. His example of dedication, hard work and compassion should be an inspiration to all throughout the entire Commonwealth.

He has my most sincere appreciation for this work, and I look forward to his continued service to Kentucky. •

DR. HENRY N. TISDALE

• Mr. GRAHAM of South Carolina. Mr. President, I wish today to commend and congratulate Dr. Henry N. Tisdale on the occasion of the celebration of his 10th anniversary as president of Claflin University and to wish him continued success as he leads this historic institution of higher education.

Dr. Tisdale has positioned Claflin as one of the premier liberal arts institutions in the Southeast, moving the university to the "Top Tier" and "Top Ten" ranking among comprehensive baccalaureate granting institutions in the South, according to U.S. News and World Report's "America's Best Colleges 2003." Under his guidance, Claflin University has increased enrollment by 60 percent, added a number of new academic majors to include mass communications, black studies, early childhood education, biochemistry, biotechnology, bioinformatics and the masters of business administration, achieved national accreditation for business administration and teacher education, and transformed the campus through the construction of new facilities, such as the Living and Learning Center and Legacy Plaza, and the restoration of many of its historic buildings.

I congratulate Dr. Tisdale on his remarkable and noteworthy achievements. May you and Claflin enjoy continued success for another 10 years and beyond. •

HONORING CAPTAIN CHRIS CHRISTOPHER

• Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I speak today to honor the service of Captain Chris Christopher, who is currently the Deputy Director for Future Operations, Communications and Business Initiatives at NMCI. Captain Christopher comes to this position after nearly 20 years of distinguished service to the Navy in the fields of aviation, public affairs and intelligence.

Captain Christopher has spent most of his life in New Orleans, and he has made a wonderful home there with his wife Penny and their two daughters. He received undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of New Orleans, and his work with NMCI still brings him back to the UNO campus. Though he is now stationed in Virginia, his heart and family remain in New Orleans. As a Louisiana Senator, I like that!

Captain Christopher's work at NMCI has been truly outstanding. The Navy Marine Corps Intranet is a progressive and comprehensive project with an ultimate goal to transform the Department of the Navy's computer and information networks in a way that increases combat readiness and effectiveness. NMCI will revolutionize command and control efficiencies within the Navy, and between the services, to ensure that our forces are operating in unison. This will save American lives, increase combat readiness and effectiveness, and, ultimately, make us stronger. Under Captain Christopher's leadership, many of these goals have been brought closer to reality.

I once again want to thank my friend, Captain Chris Christopher, for his efforts on America's behalf. Future generations of Sailors and Marines will no doubt reap the benefits of his labor and America will be safer as a result. I am proud of your 'Louisiana-bred' success Chris, and I wish you well in your future endeavors. •

COMMENTATION FOR THE LEGACY OF LOUISIANA'S LONGEST MARRIED COUPLE

• Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize George and Germaine Briant as Louisiana's longest married couple. George and Germaine Briant of Hammond, LA, were married over eighty years ago on July 20, 1921. The couple currently lives at Sunrise of Live Oak Village in Hammond where their affectionate displays of kissing, hugging, and dancing, regularly prove a true testament of their love. As the residents of Hammond would tell you, George never fails to sing "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" to Germaine, at every opportunity.

The Briants contributions to our Nation go beyond their loving example. George served in World War I and was awarded many medals, including the Purple Heart and the French Legion of

Honor, for his courageous and exceptional service to his country. The Briants only son, George H. Briant, a World War II pilot, gave his life for his country. Although the lives of George and Germaine Briant tell tales of patriotism, valor, and loss, the most salient characteristics of their marriage are commitment, loyalty, selflessness, and unconditional love.

I am proud to announce that at a time when people may need shining examples of self-sacrifice and a reminder of the responsibility involved in a commitment to family, George and Germaine Briant offer a portrait of a genuine marriage that has fidelity and trust at its roots. I know that my colleagues here in the United States Senate join me today in congratulating this exceptional couple who have shown the strength of a marriage bond that has only deepened with time.●

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE ARKANSAS EASTMAN FACILITY

● Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I am pleased to have the opportunity to bring to the attention of the Senate very good news about the work of some of my constituents. The Arkansas Eastman facility of Brock Service Painting Company, located in Batesville, AR, has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration as a "Star" site under OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program. The OSHA Voluntary Protection Program recognizes exemplary safety and health efforts demonstrated by company management and employees in a cooperative effort to promote safe and healthy practices in the work environment.

As you can imagine, I am extremely proud of the accomplishments of these Arkansas workers and their managers. The significance of their achievement is underscored when you take into account that since 1982, out of 6.2 million potential sites, only 1,041 sites have been recognized for their efforts in the Voluntary Protection Program. Moreover, only 20 contractors have been selected to receive the prestigious "Star" award.

Not only have employees of the Arkansas Eastman facility maintained a safe work environment and adhered to safe work practices, but they also have consistently exceeded the regulatory requirements established by OSHA. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, sites participating in the Voluntary Protection Program have overall lost-workday, and injury and illness rates 60 percent below their industries' averages.

The dedication and hard work of these employees are credits to themselves, their company, their family and neighbors in Batesville, and the people of Arkansas. I am happy to recognize their achievements and to salute this notable accomplishment here in the U.S. Senate.●

HONORING LT. WILLIAM P. KERBY AND OTHER WWII VETERANS

● Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I am in anticipation of a special event in my home State of Idaho. On Sunday, June 20, the Ashley Inn in Cascade, ID will dedicate Kerby Gardens on their property. For those in Idaho, particularly those in Valley County, memorializing Lt. William Paul Kerby is an important occasion that represents a man, and a generation.

Lt. William Paul Kerby deserves America's appreciation. As Valley County's first serviceman to lose his life in World War II, he displayed the selfless sacrifice of a true American. It is his dedication that Kerby Gardens hopes to honor—a spirit of sacrifice that has defined our country and the State of Idaho since its beginning and continues to do so today.

Lt. Kerby was one of over 1,700 Idahoans who never returned from the battlefield in that great and terrible war. It is to these men that we owe our freedom today. There is still no other event in modern history that so transformed our world as did the Second World War. It brought out the best in our Nation and proved the courage of an entire generation, one that has been called "The Great Generation." It is the courage and sacrifice of those veterans, men including Lt. William Kerby, that this garden remembers and honors.

In commemorating the dedication of Kerby Gardens, I would like to recognize, honor and thank Lt. Kerby and all of Idaho's veterans for their sacrifices. In World War II, as in other conflicts, America's servicemen and women have demonstrated the values and ideals our country holds dear. For their successes and their sacrifices, we are eternally grateful.●

CONGRATULATIONS TO VICE ADMIRAL MICHAEL COWAN, U.S. NAVY

● Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I wish today to pay tribute to a great American, patriot, Naval Officer, and fellow Coloradan, Vice Admiral Michael Cowan. This summer, Admiral Cowan will retire from the United States Navy after 32 years of distinguished leadership, selfless service, and tireless commitment to our Navy and Nation.

Admiral Cowan became the 34th Surgeon General of the Navy and Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery on Aug. 10, 2001. Raised in Fort Morgan, CO, he attended the University of Colorado and received his M.D. degree from Washington University, St. Louis. Postgraduate training began at Temple University and after entering the Navy, was completed at the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda. He is certified in Internal Medicine, and as a Physician Executive of the American College of Physician Executives.

Admiral Cowan began his Navy career as a General Medical Officer at

Camp Lejeune, North Carolina in 1971, and was promoted to flag rank while serving as Commanding Officer at the same hospital 25 years later. In between, he has held a wide variety of clinical, research, operational, staff and leadership positions, including Deputy Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, and Program Executive Officer, TRICARE Management Activity, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Health Affairs; Chief of Staff, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Health Affairs; Surgeon to the Joint Staff; Commander, Defense Medical Readiness Training Institute; Commanding Officer, Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune; Task Force Surgeon, Operation Restore Hope, Somalia Senior Research Fellow, National Defense University; Vice Chairman, Department of Military Medicine, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences; Chief of Internal Medicine, U.S. Naval Hospital Rota, Spain.

Throughout his career he has contributed to important advances in the military health system to include: the Military Training Network for Resuscitative Medicine, MTN; the National Disaster Medical System, NDMS; DMRTI; and the integration Force Health Protection Doctrine into Joint Staff Joint Vision 2020. At TRICARE Management Activity, he played a major leadership role in the implementation of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2001, the TRICARE e-health initiative and The National Enrollment Database. Recognized by the Department of Defense, Members of Congress, and the Nation's health care experts as a physician and leader always on the cutting edge of innovation and vision.

Admiral Cowan leaves a legacy of distinction and accomplishments in which he should take great pride and satisfaction. During his tenure as the Navy Surgeon General, he has met every challenge posed including responding to the attacks of September 11, 2001, supporting the response to the anthrax attack on the Hart Senate Office Building in October 2001, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, the ongoing Global War on Terror, and most recently the ricin attack on the Dirksen Senate Building.

Mr. President, I ask to extend best wishes on behalf of the U.S. Senate, for continued happiness and success to Admiral Cowan and his lovely wife Linda as they begin the next chapter of their lives, with the thanks and gratitude of a grateful nation for Admiral Cowan's loyal and dedicated service.●

COLONEL EDGAR F. WOODWARD, JR.

● Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, it is with tremendous gratitude today that I wish to honor Colonel Edgar F. Woodward Jr. for his dedicated service to our country in the Armed Services. Too often we forget the extreme sacrifice involved in keeping our great Nation