

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

#### 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, the hour is late, and I know we will be wrapping up in about 30 minutes or so. There is a lot of business with the recess tomorrow—and we will be in tomorrow—and we will be wrapping up tonight. It will take a while to wrap up. We will be doing that in about 30 minutes or so.

Thus, I would like to take a few minutes to come to the floor and take advantage of the time to talk about the fascinating trip I had the opportunity and the privilege to take about 3 weeks ago. I had the privilege of traveling to Normandy, France, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the D-day landings.

That same week, as my colleagues know, we suspended business on the floor of the Senate to pay tribute to President Ronald Reagan—again, a wonderful week in that the messages were delivered and the tributes were shared.

In the midst of that, however, I did not have the opportunity to share with my colleagues some of my experiences from the D-day celebration in Normandy, France, and thus I would like to take this opportunity to do that.

This particular journey took with two of our colleagues, Senator BOB BENNETT and Senator JOHN ENSIGN. The three of us had a truly extraordinary experience. We spent the previous 2 days in Baghdad, Iraq, and in Kuwait, and then flew from Baghdad to the U.S.-French binational ceremony at Omaha Beach.

Back in 1944, in the thick of war, Fortress Europe was the strongest at this point, reinforced with layers of obstacles, mines, and gun positions with hardened bunkers. Some of those structures are still there today. You can see the remnants of others. These remnants stand today almost as ghostly reminders of those battles that I had the opportunity to hear described firsthand by the veterans who had come back for the celebration.

At Normandy, Nazi forces were commanded, as we all know, by none other than Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, the “Desert Fox” of North Africa fame who was regarded as the finest, the very best field commander in the German Army. He won practically every battle he enjoined. His defenses were considered impenetrable.

In the early morning of June 6, 1944—of course, that was the day so many years later that we were there—American soldiers, mainly from the 1st Infantry Division and 29th Infantry Division, landed at that beach we visited now several weeks ago. They were supported by the Army Air Force flying over and Naval gunfire. They struggled forward inch by inch, out of boats up the beach, as fellow soldiers were literally cut down one by one, wounded, and killed in this hail of enemy gunfire.

We have all read about what went on at that beach, but to have that opportunity to hear firsthand, as we walked along the ridge above that beach, from people who were there. Many of them had not talked a lot—at least they said they had not talked a lot about their experience. They seemed to open up as we were there. Many of them were there at the age of 16, 17, 18, or 19 years of age. And they all described the battle raging. Body counts swelled, and many expressed doubt that they would succeed—they described it as such—that every second seemed like an eternity.

It was clear that in spite of all this, soldiers, through boldness and through courage, persevered.

Further down the beach, the U.S. Army Rangers had scaled the cliffs at Pointe du Hoc and knocked out the German artillery positions that were there to disrupt any invasion force.

By the end of that blood-soaked day, our American boys had pierced that Atlantic wall. They seized their objectives. And, as history would prove, because we had the opportunity to celebrate, they launched the liberation of Europe.

Thousands of American soldiers perished in those few hours. Their heroism today is marked by the familiar pictures today with television and C-SPAN and video—the familiar pictures of all of those white crosses against that green grass and the Stars of David, all in very neat rows. Wherever you stand, you see them lined up parallel, horizontally and vertically, or diagonally. Wherever you stand, the symmetry jumps out at you. It goes on for acres and acres. I have no idea how big it is. But these crosses go on for acres.

There is a little path where the beach is right below. You can walk along these winding paths of the cemetery. As you do so—especially, I think on this day, when the sky was bright blue, the white crosses, the green grass—there were veterans by the hundreds and, indeed, by the thousands with their family members, with, obviously, their daughters, sons, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren huddling around them as they walked along those paths. One could not help but admire their bravery, their boldness at a time in their life when they were very young, at a time they had to be uncertain; they were far away from home, fighting a ruthless enemy. Each cross and each star, obviously, represents a young man, a young person who died on June 6th, 1944, defending his country.

The crowds would gather as we were there. A lot of people had come in. There was a lot of security at the gathering to hear President Bush and President Chirac. As the crowd gathered, we were seated amidst the sea of veterans. Usually they put the officials in one or two rows, separated, but, no, you would sit in the audience surrounded by scores and scores of veterans.

A few minutes ago I called Congressman CHARLIE RANGEL to talk about another bill we will be talking about later tonight. In that conversation I was reminded of the fact that 2 weeks ago he was there. He called me over to meet several veterans from New York. There was another woman, Grace Bender, a neighbor of mine in Washington, DC. I had no idea I would see her there. She was there a few rows away with her father, of whom she was clearly so proud.

The veterans were gathering with their buddies and with their family members, with their shipmates, with their fellow crewmen. Even after 60 years, they clearly regarded these colleagues, these comrades in arms, as brothers, bonds forged over that period of a day, weeks, and those months in the midst of this war.

I vividly remember standing for the national anthem. As we all stood up, the first people on their feet were those veterans, the “greatest generation.” They were the first to stand. I also noted, they were the ones who would be singing the loudest. They seemed to stand the tallest. Their love of country clearly had even grown over time.

President Bush spoke and delivered captivating remarks. President Chirac also delivered stirring remarks. They both recounted specific moments and acts of heroism on D-day. We honored those who gathered and we paid tribute to those who were no longer with us, the soldiers and the sailors and the airmen who had made that ultimate sacrifice for the cause of freedom.

The ceremony ended with a ceremony of honor guards. Again, my heart filled with awe and admiration to be able to walk with those veterans on that D-day celebration. They were then, and they clearly remain today, true heroes.

After the ceremony, my colleagues and I boarded a bus to the town of Bayeaux, a small French village that was spared the heavy fighting and bombing on D-day and of the weeks that followed. As we rode the bus through the countryside, we passed through beautiful green fields, hedgerows, and small towns of the French countryside that were showered in 1944 by the American paratroopers of the 101st and the 82nd Airborne Divisions, the night before those Normandy landings.

I specifically mention the 101st because this past weekend I had the opportunity to be in Clarksville, TN, and Fort Campbell, KY, and had the opportunity to witness an air show in which the 101st Airborne participated. You can see dramatically their training exercises.

While I was in Kentucky last week, again, I was thinking back to what happened in 1944 when these paratroopers of the 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions paratrooped in the night before. Thousands of those paratroopers, as we all know, were killed. Many of them drowned. Many were wounded that night. Many were wounded on the

jump itself. The mission was specifically to jump behind enemy lines to distract the Nazis and seize important strategic or key terrain and to disrupt the Nazi reinforcements. Their heroism and success were ultimately crucial to the allied victories at Omaha Beach, at Juno, at Sword, and at Gold.

When we arrived in Bayeaux, we were greeted by the President of the French Senate. We had the opportunity to have lunch there with 33 members of their Senate. We also met with the town mayor, and many of the town citizens came out to speak of this. I don't speak French, but as I went over to the side and shook hands and introduced myself to an interpreter, immediately a smile came on their faces with an expression of appreciation and thanks.

Among the people we had the opportunity to meet were many survivors of war who had been small children at the time of the occupation. They did recall D-day and the American GIs who liberated their villages.

They treated us to a wonderful luncheon that day and, once again, representing America as officials, U.S. Senators from America, we were showered with praise and thanks, as well as a promise of continued friendship and alliance. This was a group of French Senators, so I did not expect that at the time, but that is what we received.

Our final event for the day was also very special. It was the multinational ceremony at Arromanches. We were joined by gatherings of heads of state from around the world, senior officials from countries around the world, and a number of our allied nations. We watched a whole range of demonstrations by various multinational military marching units. We had flyovers occur where a number of these nations demonstrated the very best of their aircraft in precision flights overhead. They had a wonderful multimedia presentation that combined the best of dance and video and audio to recount that history of World War II with a very special focus on Normandy.

During the final ceremony of the day, in which President Chirac delivered remarks, we did have the opportunity to reflect on those larger contours of the war and how America and her allies united to defeat tyranny and oppression.

As we sat among the survivors of D-day and as we listened to America's veterans recount their fears and exploits, I could not help but draw comparisons between the veterans of World War II and our proud troops serving abroad today, the very same troops which 2 days prior my colleagues and I had the opportunity to visit in Baghdad and in Kuwait. The parallel is there, not just because of the temporal relationship, but because of both groups' commitment to freedom and democracy and to a better life for others.

America was blessed in World War II on that June 6th, so long ago, yet so

close, as it is now, to have the very same soldiers who have that strong character, who have that courage, that boldness, and that determination. Young patriots, then, as now, answered the call of duty, and through their bravery and through their selfless determination, they fought and they won the battle for freedom and security.

It was these traits that inspired a whole succession of American Presidents, including the late President Reagan to whom we paid tribute 2 weeks ago. He believed in a Europe and a world whole and free of the shadow of communism. The "greatest generation" threat involved nazism and fascism. For nearly 50 years, America confronted another hegemonic ideology, that being communism. Under the leadership and vision of President Reagan, we emerged from the cold war victorious and, as Margaret Thatcher rightly reminds us, without firing a single shot.

Today, we do fight a different enemy, but one that is no less ruthless, no less determined, no less uncompromising than our enemies of those wars past.

Once again, we must stay the course. Once again, we must have faith in our Armed Forces. Once again, we must hold tightly to the belief that freedom will prevail. That is our challenge. That is our calling. And I truly believe, like generations before us, we will look evil squarely in the eye, and we will not flinch, we will not run. We will gather up our courage to press forward. We will gather up our courage to press forward and defeat the forces of terror and secure the blessings of democracy.

#### AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, on a separate issue, I want to comment on an issue I mentioned this morning in opening the U.S. Senate, an issue that centers on something very close to my heart, and that is the continent of Africa.

I have had the opportunity to travel to Africa this year, to a number of African countries, and the year before that, and the year before that, and the year before that. Indeed, I have had the opportunity to travel to the continent of Africa yearly for the last several years.

In each case, with maybe one or two exceptions where I went as an official, I have had the opportunity to travel to Africa as part of a medical mission group, where I have the real privilege of being able to interact with the peoples of Africa—whether it is in Kenya, or Tanzania, or Uganda, or the Sudan; the Sudan is where I usually go—by delivering health care and medicine, and performing surgery, which is what I happen to do when I visit with peoples who might not otherwise have access to that health care.

I mention that only because it allows me to be able to talk to real people, not just as an official or a VIP coming

in, not as somebody wearing a suit from the United States of America, but to have the opportunity to interact with real people in that doctor-patient relationship. I say doctor-patient relationship; really it is a friend-to-friend relationship. You hear stories, and you really cut through superfluous aspects of people's lives and go right to the heart of what affects them in their lives.

It really comes down to how they can provide for their families, how they can get a job, how they can earn an income, and how they can, in a very primitive way but a very real way, make the lives of their children better than theirs—the same desires we all have as Americans.

I am talking about people in the bush, people in the heart of Africa, people 1,000 miles south of Khartoum and 500 miles west of the Nile River, way in the bush. When you talk to people, you realize they struggle with the exact same things we do, and that is, dignity; that is, a concept of self-worth.

Also, I had the opportunity to travel to Uganda and Kenya and throughout East and Central Africa. What people will tell you is that policy in the United States makes a difference in their lives; that is, policy over the last several years. You may ask them: How do you know what we do? They know that a bill that was passed on the floor of the Senate and the House of Representatives not too many years ago, signed by President Clinton, called the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, has made a difference in their lives.

Indeed, that particular act, passed by the Senate, has created at least 150,000 jobs. When President Museveni from Uganda was here, he said, no, it is more than that. It is 300,000 jobs. But the point is, thousands and thousands of jobs have been created in Africa because of legislation that passed on this floor. And a little bit later tonight, hopefully in a few minutes, it will be passed on this floor once again.

I mentioned a few minutes ago I called Congressman CHARLIE RANGEL. I did that to congratulate him because he has spearheaded, along with many of his colleagues in the House of Representatives, this particular bill, a bill that is called H.R. 4103, the AGOA Acceleration Act of 2004. AGOA simply stands for African Growth and Opportunity Act.

The bill we will be addressing here tonight extends the AGOA preference by 7 years, from 2008 to 2015, and, more importantly, it extends the third country fabric provisions that were due to expire this year for another 3 years.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act authorizes the President to provide duty-free treatment for certain articles imported from sub-Saharan African countries. It also provides duty- and quota-free access to the U.S. market for apparel made from U.S. fabric, yarn, and thread.

The program has been a huge success for U.S. policy toward sub-Saharan Africa. AGOA has helped expand African