

trade. It has created jobs, as I mentioned. It has brought about improvements in economic conditions that will be realized in a very sustained way throughout Africa. Expanded trade, as we all know, not only helps sub-Saharan African countries develop this sustainable economic base, but it also leads to efficient government practices, to transparency, and to political stability.

U.S. exports to sub-Saharan Africa increased 13 percent from 2002 to 2003. It has created jobs. The United States, today, is sub-Saharan Africa's largest single export market, accounting for 26 percent of the region's total exports in 2001 alone. U.S. imports under AGOA have almost doubled between 2001 and 2003—up to the 2003 level of over \$13 billion.

One African leader described the program as “the greatest friendship act” by the U.S. Government towards Africa. In fact, the program has been so well received and effective in Africa that the European Union is now reexamining its preference program for Africa in light of AGOA's success.

So, Mr. President, I am pleased that we are going to address this legislation tonight. Again, having spent so much time in Africa, it is with great pride that I congratulate my colleagues for addressing this important issue tonight.

#### THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, it will still be a few minutes before we close tonight, and I do want to take the opportunity to thank my colleagues for all the tremendous work they have done over the course of this week. It has been a very busy week. But tomorrow we will be leaving on a recess for several days for the Fourth of July, and we can look back over the course of the past week with the satisfaction that we accomplished passage of a number of bills I will mention in a few minutes.

But two very significant pieces of legislation that address where the focus of the United States is and should be—and that is, the defense of our country, and the support of our troops overseas and the support of our troops here—are the Defense authorization bill, with passage yesterday, and the Defense appropriations bill, with passage today.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### POLITICS OF COMMON GROUND

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I want to talk, if I can, about another matter

to which I have given a great deal of thought. I would like to share some thoughts with my colleagues on it this afternoon.

I would like to begin by referencing a trip I took last weekend. I traveled to Kuwait, Jordan, and Iraq with Senators BIDEN and GRAHAM. We went to Baghdad to talk with coalition and Iraqi leaders as they prepare for the historic transfer of sovereignty to Iraq 6 days from today. We went to thank our troops who are making enormous sacrifices, braving extraordinary risks every minute of the day. We wanted to assure them they have the support and respect of every Member of the Senate and all Americans.

Our trip was especially productive because of the experiences and insights of the Senators with whom I traveled. Senator JOE BIDEN, the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has been a leading voice in the Senate on foreign policy issues for now almost a quarter century.

Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM has quickly established himself as one of the most authoritative and independent voices on the Senate Armed Services Committee. Senator GRAHAM, as we all know, is a colonel and a Reserve judge in the Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals. He and I have been working together for more than a year to improve health care benefits to National Guard members and their families. I know from working with him on the TRICARE bill that he is fiercely committed to American troops and American veterans.

LINDSEY GRAHAM is a proud Republican. JOE BIDEN and I are proud Democrats. But we are all, first and foremost, proud Americans. We are all committed to the safety of our troops. We all want the Iraqi people to succeed in building a stable, free, and pluralistic Iraq. It is in their interest, but it is also in America's interest and, I would argue, the world's interest.

Our trip to Iraq reminded me again how much this Senate and the American people benefit when we are able to focus on the problems that unite us.

No one who saw it will ever forget the cloudless, deep blue sky on the morning of September 11. Pilots have a term for visibility conditions on days like that—they call it “severe clear.”

We all saw it clearly that day. We saw horrific acts of inhumanity, but we also saw, with equal clarity, countless acts of nobility and compassion. We saw beyond the labels of race, income, gender, and the other distinctions that too often divide us.

We are more alike than we are different. All Americans want to live in a world that is safe and secure and just. Whether we're Republicans or Democrats, or don't care one whit about politics, all Americans want to be able to earn enough to care for our families' basic needs. After a lifetime of working hard, all Americans want to be able to retire with dignity and security. All Americans need affordable health care.

All Americans want to be able to send their children to good schools; that is not simply a Democratic or Republican aspiration, it is a necessity for our children's future and the economic, political, and social well-being of our Nation.

These are dangerous and challenging times, but Americans have faced danger and challenges before, and we must always remember that we have emerged stronger when we have faced those challenges together. We are stronger together than separately.

This afternoon, I want to talk about how I believe the Members of the Senate can work together more constructively to solve the big challenges facing our country today.

The result of all-or-nothing politics is too often nothing. We owe the American people better than that.

I believe in what I like to call the Politics of Common Ground. Practicing the Politics of Common Ground does not mean betraying one's principles. We can bend on details without abandoning our basic beliefs. The Politics of Common Ground is pragmatic, not dogmatic. It recognizes there can be different ways to reach the same goal. It puts our common interests ahead of personal or partisan interests. Instead of narrow ideological victories, the politics of common ground seeks broad, principled compromise.

I recognize some people may think this timing is strange, to talk about searching for common ground now in the midst of campaign season. But I actually believe it is exactly the right time.

The truth is, no one knows which party will control the Senate next year, or the House, or the White House, so neither party can be accused of embracing these ideas for partisan advantage.

The Politics of Common Ground rests on four fundamental commitments. Obviously it takes at least two to seek common ground. Neither party can make these principles work alone. If Democrats hold the majority in the next Senate, these are the four fundamental principles by which we would seek to govern:

First, deal in good faith with the executive branch, regardless of which party holds the majority.

Second, preserve and fulfill the historical role of the Senate regarding budgetary responsibilities, oversight, and advice and consent on nominees, regardless of which party holds the majority.

Third, respect the rights of the minority and seek to work in good faith with them.

Fourth, end the cycle of partisan retaliation.

This week marks the 40th anniversary of the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, one of the greatest common ground victories in our Nation's history.

It was a Democratic President, Lyndon Johnson, who signed the Civil

Rights Act, but it was a courageous Republican leader, Senator Everett Dirksen, who provided the political leadership that finally ended the years of opposition and put the civil rights bill on the President's desk.

There are some today who believe the only way to move America forward is to ignore or change the rules of the Senate. What their arguments fail to recognize is the Founding Fathers deliberately designed this Senate to protect the rights of the minority. They did so because they understood that the only way to make just and lasting change in a democracy is to first build broad support for it. They also understood, as Everett Dirksen said in calling for the vote on the Civil Rights Act, that nothing can stop an idea whose time has come.

Finding common ground requires that we follow the rules of the Senate, not ignore or rewrite them.

It requires that all Senators—whether they are in the majority or minority—be treated fairly. That means safeguarding the rights of every Senator. It means establishing fair representation on all Senate committees. And it means observing the traditional procedures for conference committees concerning the appointment of conferees, and the right of all conferees to participate fully in all meetings. A closed meeting that is a conference committee in name only is no place to look for common ground.

Finding common ground also means listening to each other.

Someone who was a good friend to many of us, Senator Pat Moynihan, used to blame television for what he saw as a decline in cross-party cooperation in the Senate. Before TV, he said, Senators from both parties used to spend their evenings talking to each other. It helped to see things from the other person's perspective.

I would like to see the Senate create more opportunities to increase cross-party understanding.

Next year, I would like to see the Senate hold bipartisan leadership meetings every 2 months at least, and bipartisan joint caucus meetings at least every quarter.

I would like to see us hold periodic, bipartisan policy forums for all Senators in the Old Senate Chamber, where the Missouri Compromise and other historic agreements were reached.

When Senator LOTT was majority leader, he established the Leaders Lecture Series to draw on the wisdom of former Senate leaders, from Mike Mansfield and Senator BYRD to Robert Dole and George Herbert Walker Bush.

The Leaders Lecture Series represents one of the most insightful seminars ever taught on common ground politics.

I would like to see us build on that success next year by inviting former Senate leaders to a summit where they can share their ideas with us, and with each other.

Senators DORGAN and KYL had a good idea recently to hold occasional, thoughtful, Lincoln-Douglas style debates here on the Senate floor on the most important issues of the day. Let us build on those debates next year.

President Reagan was as ideological a President as any of us have ever seen. But he understood that political adversaries don't have to be enemies.

He and Tip O'Neill had a rule: after 6 o'clock, they were always friends.

Something as simple as just getting our families together once in a while for a barbecue or a potluck supper—or even choosing an annual charity to which all Senators could contribute—could help Senators find common ground, I think, and may strengthen the bonds of friendship and trust between our two parties.

In addition, I would like to see the Senate reward the search for common ground solutions by giving special consideration to bills with strong bipartisan co-sponsorship.

There are questions of enormous consequence facing our Nation today—questions that will define what kind of Nation we are, and what sort of future we will leave for our children.

How do we balance freedom and security in a post-September 11 world?

How do we keep the good jobs we have and create more of them in a global economy?

How do we craft a national budget that reflects our national values?

How can we reduce our over-reliance on imported oil so the fate of our Nation is not tied so directly to the stability of some of the most dangerous and volatile places on Earth?

Last year, I got a note from a father in South Dakota who had lost a good-paying job as a machinist 2 years earlier when his employer moved out of state. He was working as a handyman, earning a fraction of his old income. The only health insurance he and his wife could afford had such a high deductible that they tried never to use it. He hadn't seen a doctor in 15 years or a dentist in 10 years. He felt ashamed. The worst part, he said, was having to tell his children, when they got sick, that there was no money for a doctor.

Because Republicans and Democrats in Congress had the courage to practice the Politics of Common Ground 7 years ago, I was able to tell that father about the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Today, if his children are sick, he takes them to the doctor. As he puts it, "I show the people in the doctor's office that card and I'm treated like a human being. It's the greatest thing in the world."

Across America today, the CHIP program is providing health insurance for nearly 4 million children from low-income families, and peace of mind for their parents. More than 9,300 children in South Dakota have health coverage through CHIP.

How can we now build on this common ground success? How do we make

health care more affordable so that exploding health care costs don't break family budgets and eat up corporate profits that could be better used to create new jobs and invest in new plants and equipment?

We can choose to shrug our shoulders and say that the divisions in Congress simply reflect the increasing polarization in our society—and let it go at that. But I believe we have a higher responsibility. If society is divided, it is the responsibility of leaders to try to bridge the divide, not simply mirror or exploit it.

The Politics of Common Ground is the Politics of Common Good. It is more than a political challenge; it is a moral imperative.

Last weekend in Iraq, Senators BIDEN and GRAHAM and I met with members of the new Iraqi government, with Paul Bremer, the head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, and with senior military leaders. They were all impressive.

But the people who inspired me most were the soldiers.

We were helped by National Guard members from Minnesota, Kansas, Illinois and Texas, and we met troops from Mississippi, South Carolina, Delaware and other states. In fact, we met extraordinary people from almost every state. Every one of them deserves our profound appreciation.

I was especially moved by the dozens of South Dakotans I met.

One of those South Dakotans is a member of the South Dakota National Guard's 153rd Engineer Battalion. Home for him is a small family farm in South Dakota. But these days, his unit is deployed to Baghdad International Airport. He and his unit provided security for our delegation in Baghdad. When we left, he handed me a letter that reads, in part, "I am very proud to fight and to serve my country, like so many of my relatives before me."

He went on, in that letter, to talk about the challenges he and his family face today. He didn't want his wife and their teenage children to have to bear the burden of caring for the family's cattle while he was gone, so he sold the entire herd when he was deployed. When he returns—which may not be until sometime next year—he will buy the herd back. But he and his family will still be out 2 years' worth of income they would have earned from their cattle. He wasn't complaining. He just wanted us to know.

I met another soldier from South Dakota who is with the Army's First Cavalry Division. They have a dangerous mission: securing Baghdad. But he and the other members of the First "Cav" aren't complaining, either.

I met a family practice doctor who grew up in Rapid City. Today, she is healing the bodies and saving the lives of U.S. troops and Iraqi civilians at the Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad.

Finally, I got to eat supper in Kuwait on Saturday with a group of men and women whose families I have been

working with for months: the members of the South Dakota National Guard's 740th Transportation Unit.

Two months ago, the members of the 740th had already packed their bags when they got word that their tour was being extended. It was their second extension.

They have now been deployed for 14 months—2 months longer than they were told was the longest they would be gone when they left South Dakota.

When I asked one soldier at super if they had been given a new date to return home, he told me "the second." I thought he meant their tour was ending on July 2nd. Then he explained, they will know when they are coming home the second they get on the plane.

Even these soldiers were not complaining—just trying to find a little humor in a tough situation.

Pride in one's party and the principles for which it stands is admirable. But there are causes that matter more than political parties.

There the values and hopes that transcend party labels and unite us all as Americans—so eloquently again related to me in conversations I had with those soldiers.

During campaigns, candidates and parties should be clear about where we stand on the issues and how we differ with our opponents so that voters can make a choice. That is part of the campaign. That is an essential part of democracy.

But we also have a responsibility to work together constructively, where we can, to find common ground.

Making the principled compromises necessary to make democracy work takes effort. It takes patience and trust and, often, a little humility.

It requires that we listen to others and admit that someone else just might have a better idea sometimes.

It's not simple or easy. But if our troops can give the extra measure of devotion and risk their lives because our Nation asks them to, surely we can make the extra effort to find solutions to the problems facing these soldiers' families, and all Americans—both in times of peace and war.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAPO). The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I echo the sentiment and the words of the minority leader today. I applaud him for bringing up this initiative, the politics of common ground. When I think about the term "common ground," sometimes I think about the concept of compromise. When we think about compromise, we know that means finding common ground without sacrificing your principles.

One thing the distinguished Senator from South Dakota is talking about is that we all have our differences. Lord knows, we have a lot of differences just on this side of the aisle. Trying to get on one page a lot of times is nearly impossible.

Certainly we have our differences in this body. That is OK. If you think

about it, that is exactly the way the Founding Fathers intended it to be. They wanted Members to come here and do battle in the Senate and talk about ideas and concepts and policies that we all believe are good for our Nation. We may have different approaches on different issues, but certainly at the end of the day we should all work together, shake hands, and move on to the next issue.

When I was running for the Senate, one thing I heard from people all over my State, the State of Arkansas, was: There is too much partisan bickering in Washington. In fact, they would tell me when I traveled around the State, it looks a lot like trench warfare in Washington. The two sides are dug in, shooting at each other, but at the end of the process not a lot gets done, although there are a lot of casualties. People all over the country sense that. They know that.

As a Democrat in this Senate, I felt aggrieved by some things the other side has done. I have no doubt they feel aggrieved about some of the things we have done. It is incumbent upon Senators to put the past behind us, put all that aside, move forward, do what is right and do what is best for this Nation.

I hope this Senate will return to the best traditions of our democracy. I hope we will find it within ourselves to wipe the slate clean and accept today as a new day, with this initiative, the politics of common ground as our guiding principle.

One thing I love about the statement by the minority leader, he used words such as "good faith" and "respect," words that we need to take to heart as Senators. He talks about ending the cycle of partisan retaliation. Is there ever a time in our history more than today that we should do that? I don't think so. We need to end that cycle of partisan retaliation. We do not only owe it to our Founding Fathers who founded this democracy—and we occupy the seats they established—we not only owe it to the history of this Nation; we owe it to our children and our grandchildren. We also owe it to the people we work for, the people who sent us to Washington, to do their work for them.

There are many core principles in our democracy, principles that are indispensable. One of those principles is the idea of representation. Like it or not, the people of Arkansas sent me to Washington to represent them in this great body. Like it or not, people sent all 100 of us to represent them in this great body. I certainly hope each and every Senator will find it in their heart, find it in their mind to respect the will of the people from other States and respect the office each Senator has and the responsibility he or she has to represent his or her people to the best of his ability.

To make things better in this Senate and in this Congress and in this Government, quite frankly, it has to start

with the majority party. We do not know in 7 months which will be the majority party in the Senate or in the House. We do not know who will be in the White House. But it is incumbent upon us that whoever is in the majority party should lead by example. They should demonstrate their leadership by demonstrating forgiveness. We need to say no to the politics of revenge. We need to return to our first principles, turn back to the things that make this country great.

We talk about respecting the rights of the minority in the politics of common ground. This body definitely, certainly, absolutely should respect majority rule but also we should respect minority rights. In fact, this body was created at the foundations of this country. This body was created to protect the minority. That is why small States such as Delaware and New Hampshire get equal representation in the Senate, as equal as much larger States such as New York and Virginia. We are all equal in this body, all 100 of us, all 50 States.

I hope we will follow this politics of common ground. In essence, it can be summarized by one thing, and that is to do right. That is what we need to see more of around here.

One thing I like about the minority leader's proposal is that we acknowledge we cannot change the world. We know that. We cannot raise a magic wand and make it better. My grandmother, Susie Pryor, said you cannot clean up the whole world but you can clean up your little corner.

I hope today Democrats, Republicans, and Independents will take the responsibility to clean up our little corner of it. Let's clean up the Senate and return to politics of common ground.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. I thank the distinguished Senator from Arkansas for his eloquent statement for being part of the inspiration for this proposal creating the Politics of Common Ground.

I will tell my colleagues, as I began thinking through many of these particular ideas and the suggestions we have now made, it was the Senator from Arkansas who was extraordinarily helpful and who had many creative ideas and thoughts on how we might discuss this matter and make these proposals.

I acknowledge the Senator's important contribution and thank him for his statement and appreciate the tone he has helped create virtually since he has arrived in the Senate. He believes in the Politics of Common Ground—but for him it is more than just words; it is deeds. He has again demonstrated that this afternoon. I am grateful.