

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL ROBERT B. FLOWERS

• Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I want to take a few moments today to publicly thank Lieutenant General Robert Flowers, who left his post as commander and chief of engineers of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on July 1. General Flowers is one of the finest individuals I have worked with as a U.S. Senator representing North Dakota. He is not only a fine, trusted public servant, he is also a good friend.

North Dakota and the Nation owe General Flowers a deep debt of gratitude. He served as chief of engineers for 4 years, and he served admirably. During that period, he helped advance the construction of the Grand Forks flood control project and other important flood control projects in the Red River Valley. He also fought hand in hand with the North Dakota congressional delegation as we have worked to implement solutions to the chronic flood at Devils Lake. Throughout it all, he has always gone above and beyond the call of duty.

General Flowers is one of the most capable leaders of the Corps of Engineers I have ever had the pleasure of working with. He is a true professional, and has a unique ability to walk into a difficult condition, assess the situation, and calmly, but decisively, take action. He listens carefully to people and has a leadership style that invites creative solutions to complex problems.

General Flowers is also a man of tremendous integrity. He cares deeply about the people of this Nation, and his commitment to doing the right thing was unmatched. He was willing to fight for the needs of common citizens, even if it meant leading an uphill fight and challenging others within the Corps. To General Flowers, "no" was simply unacceptable. He worked diligently to turn over every stone and formulate solutions that are workable and responsive to the water challenges faced by communities across the country.

I know that the General Flowers leaves the Corps a much better organization due to his leadership. The General set high standards for his team, and they delivered time and time again. I will not forget the contributions General Flowers has made to the people of my State and the country.

I want to again express my deep appreciation and respect for General Flowers for his service to my state and to our Nation. We in North Dakota will miss you, General, but wish you all the best.●

RETIREMENT OF ADMIRAL JAMES O. ELLIS, JR. FROM U.S. STRATEGIC COMMAND

• Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, today, it is my honor and my privilege to recognize one of the finest officers in the U.S. Navy, and a good friend of mine, ADM James O. Ellis, Jr.

For the past 3 years, ADM Jim Ellis has demonstrated his leadership as commander of United States Strategic Command. During his time at Offutt AFB, in Nebraska, Jim Ellis personified the Navy's core values of integrity, selfless service, and excellence in all things. I join the many Members and staff who enjoyed the opportunity to meet with him on a variety of strategic issues and came to appreciate his ability to integrate his many talents at Offutt.

Admiral Ellis is retiring from his post tomorrow. There will be a ceremony in Omaha to honor him that I will attend.

Today, it is my privilege to recognize with admiration and thanks some of Admiral Ellis' many accomplishments since he entered the military 35 years ago, and to commend the superb service he provided the Navy, the Congress and the Nation. Admiral Ellis is a 1969 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. He was designated a Naval aviator in 1971 and has held a variety of sea and shore assignments since 1972.

His sea duty billets as a Navy fighter pilot included tours with Fighter Squadron 92 aboard USS *Constellation*, CV 64, and Fighter Squadron 1 aboard USS *Ranger*, CV 61.

From early in his career, Jim Ellis' exceptional leadership skills were evident as he repeatedly proved himself in select command positions. Admiral Ellis was the first Commanding Officer of Strike/Fighter Squadron 131, deploying in 1985 with new F/A-18 Hornets aboard USS *Coral Sea*, CV 43. He served as executive officer of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS *Kalifornia*, CVN 70, and as commanding officer of USS *LaSalle*, AGF 3, the Arabian Gulf flagship of the Commander, Joint Task Force, Middle East.

In 1991, Admiral Ellis assumed command of the USS *Abraham Lincoln*, CVN 72, and participated in Operation Desert Storm while deployed during her maiden voyage in the western Pacific and Arabian Gulf. In June 1995, Admiral Ellis assumed command of Carrier Group FIVE/Battle Force SEVENTH Fleet, breaking his flag aboard USS *Independence*, CV 62, forward deployed to the Western Pacific and homeported in Yokosuka, Japan. As carrier battle group commander he led contingency response operations to both the Arabian Gulf and Taiwan Straits.

Admiral Ellis also excelled in a variety of key shore and staff assignments that included tours as an experimental/operational test pilot, service in the Navy Office of Legislative Affairs, and duty as F/A-18 program coordinator, deputy chief of Naval Operations, Air Warfare. He also served as deputy commander and chief of Staff, Joint Task Force FIVE, the counternarcotics force for U.S. Commander in Chief Pacific. In November 1993 he reported as inspector general, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, and subsequently served as director for Operations, Plans and Policy, N3/N5, on

the staff of the commander in chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet. He assumed duties as deputy chief of Naval Operations—Plans, Policy and Operations—in November 1996.

Admiral Ellis became commander in chief, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe headquartered in London, England, and commander in chief, Allied Forces, Southern Europe headquartered in Naples, Italy, in October 1998. During his time serving in Europe, Admiral Ellis provided support to NATO forces as they waged war over Kosovo.

I was especially pleased when he was nominated to continue service to the Nation as commander, U.S. Strategic Command in 2001. As such, Admiral Ellis is responsible for the global command and control of U.S. strategic forces and provides a sweeping range of strategic capabilities and options for the President and Secretary of Defense. While combatant commander in 2002, Admiral Ellis oversaw the merger of U.S. Space Command with U.S. Strategic Command, demonstrating exemplary leadership during a critical period of transition.

Over the years, Admiral Ellis' leadership, professionalism and expertise enabled him to foster exceptional rapport with many Members of both the Senate and the House. I am personally grateful for his friendship. I offer congratulations to him and his wife, Polly, on his exceptionally well-deserved retirement. The Congress and country applaud the selfless commitment his entire family has made to the Nation in supporting his military career. I know I speak for all my colleagues in expressing my heartfelt appreciation to Admiral Ellis. We wish our friend the best of luck. He is truly a credit to both the Navy and the Nation.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:26 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1856. An act to reauthorize the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3890. An act to reauthorize the Steel and Aluminum Energy Conservation and Technology Competitiveness Act of 1998.

H.R. 4218. An act to amend the High-Performance Computing Act of 1991.

H.R. 4516. An act to require the Secretary of Energy to carry out a program of research and development to advance high-end computing.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 301. Concurrent resolution supporting the goals and ideals of the World Year of Physics.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first time and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1856. An act to reauthorize the harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 3890. An act to reauthorize the Steel and Aluminum Energy Conservation and Technology Competitiveness Act of 1998; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 4218. An act to amend the High-Performance Computing Act of 1991; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 4516. An act to require the Secretary of Energy to carry out a program of research and development to advance high-end computing; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following joint resolution was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. Res. 40. Joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to marriage.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bills were read the first time:

S. 2629. A bill to amend the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 to eliminate the coverage gap, to eliminate HMO subsidies, to repeal health savings accounts, and for other purposes.

S. 2630. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code to establish a national health program administered by the Office of Personnel Management to offer Federal employee benefits plans to individuals who are not Federal employees, and for other purposes.

S. 2631. A bill to require the Federal Trade Commission to monitor and investigate gasoline prices under certain circumstances.

S. 2632. A bill to establish a first responder and terrorism preparedness grant information hotline, and for other purposes.

S. 2633. A bill to amend the Federal Power Act to provide refunds for unjust and unreasonable charges on electric energy in the State of California.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with

accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-8307. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Management, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Department's competitive sourcing efforts; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8308. A communication from the Deputy Chief Financial Officer, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Department's competitive sourcing efforts; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8309. A communication from the Chairman and President, Export-Import Bank of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a transaction involving U.S. exports to Australia; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8310. A communication from the Assistant to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fair Credit Reporting Act" received on June 24, 2004; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8311. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Banking and Finance, Departmental Offices, Department of the Treasury transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Terrorism Risk Insurance Program—Claims Procedures" (RIN1505-AB07) received on June 24, 2004; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8312. A communication from the Deputy Secretary, Division of Investment Management, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Disclosure Regarding Approval of Investment Advisory Contracts By Directors of Investment Companies" (RIN3235-AJ10) received on June 25, 2004; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8313. A communication from the Senior Paralegal for Regulations, Office of Thrift Supervision, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Assessments and Fees" (RIN1550-AB89) received on July 6, 2004; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8314. A communication from the General Counsel, National Credit Union Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Suretyship and Guaranty; Maximum Borrowing Authority" received on July 4, 2004; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8315. A communication from the General Counsel, National Credit Union Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "12 C.F.R. Part 745 Share Insurance and Appendix" received on July 4, 2004; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8316. A communication from the General Counsel, National Credit Union Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Organization and Operations of Federal Credit Unions; Loan Participation" received on July 4, 2004; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8317. A communication from the General Counsel, National Credit Union Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "12 C.F.R. Part 708a; Conversion of Insured Credit Unions to Mutual Savings Banks" received on July 4, 2004; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8318. A communication from the Deputy Secretary, Division of Market Regula-

tion, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Rule 31—Section 31 Transaction Fees; Rule 31T—Temporary Rule Regarding Fiscal Year 2004; Form R31—Form for Reporting Covered Sales and Covered Round Turn Transactions Under Section 31 of the Securities and Exchange Act of 1934" (RIN3235-AJ02) received on July 6, 2004; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8319. A communication from the Chairman, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the profitability of the credit card operations of depository institutions; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8320. A communication from the Deputy Secretary, Division of Investment Management, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Investment Adviser Codes of Ethics" (RIN3235-AJ08) received on July 6, 2004; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8321. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Bureau of the Public Debt, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "31 CFR Part 344, U.S. Treasury Securities—State and Local Government Series" received on July 6, 2004; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8322. A communication from the Administrator, Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Administration's competitive sourcing efforts; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

EC-8323. A communication from the Co-Chairs, Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Interim Report; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-8324. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General for Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Department's competitive sourcing efforts; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-8325. A communication from the Attorney General of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Justice's Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2003-2008; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-8326. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Victims Compensation Fund; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-8327. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel and Designated Reporting Official, Office of National Drug Control Policy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a vacancy in the position of Deputy Director for Supply Reduction, Office of National Drug Control Policy, received on July 1, 2004; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-8328. A communication from the White House Liaison, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a nomination confirmed for the position of Under Secretary, Department of Education, received on June 25, 2004; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-8329. A communication from the White House Liaison, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a nomination for the position of Under Secretary, Department of Education, received on June 25, 2004; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-8330. A communication from the White House Liaison, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a nomination for the position of Deputy Secretary, Department of Education, received