

taken a turn for the worse. Rocket attacks on Israel continued to be launched from the Gaza Strip. In the last 9 months, 219 Palestinians have died in internecine clashes. In the West Bank city of Ramallah, Hamas has claimed responsibility for abducting and killing an Israeli settler after issuing demands for the release of Palestinian prisoners. This past weekend, three Jewish settlers were killed and five were wounded in shootings in the West Bank. The Al Aqsa Martyr's Brigade has claimed responsibility for these attacks.

These events threaten to derail the peace process and to move both sides backward. We have reached a critical juncture in the Middle East peace process. The Israeli disengagement from Gaza offers a tremendous opportunity to get the peace process and the roadmap back on track. To succeed, both sides must fulfill their responsibilities, but this requires a secure environment in order to act.

For the Palestinians, this means ending incitement, dismantling the terrorist groups, and disarming the militias. This is what I will impress on President Abbas when I meet with him later today. The violence must be renounced, and it must end. Making progress on these issues can set the stage for Israel to move forward on the release of Palestinian prisoners and relieving restrictions on travel.

I commend President Abbas for his leadership. He has made measurable progress in advancing internal reforms in the Palestinian Authority. More is clearly needed, though, and more must be done.

For example, the PA security forces must be reformed, unified, and given the mandate to enforce the rule of law and establish order in the West Bank and Gaza. President Abbas needs and deserves our continued support, and the Congress has provided the funding to help the Palestinian people and make reform a reality.

The United States remains committed to President Bush's vision of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. We will continue to work with both parties to fulfill their obligations under the roadmap toward a true and lasting peace.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as in morning business for 5 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I appreciate the courtesy of the Senator from Michigan.

SECURING OUR BORDERS

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise to speak briefly to highlight again the

Homeland Security bill, which this body passed and the House passed and the President signed this week. I think it is important when we do something that is substantive and addresses what I see—and I think most people see—as a very significant issue for our Nation, which is controlling our borders, we should talk about it a little bit so the people understand what we did because in the activities that so dominate the daily news—whether it is a hurricane or the issues in relation to a Supreme Court nominee—things that are moving in the right direction tend to get lost. But what is moving in the right direction right now is our attempts as a nation, with the President's leadership and this Congress's aggressiveness, in the area of trying to control our borders.

The Homeland Security appropriations bill—and I have the good fortune to chair the Homeland Security Subcommittee and the ranking member is Senator BYRD—I do not think of him as the ranking member; quite honestly, I think of him as the senior member—is a bill that is structured around the theory that we should address threat.

It was a unique approach to an appropriations bill because it is a unique issue. Most appropriations bills take on a variety of different questions and the management of the Government and how the Government is functioning. But we decided to do the bill based on a theme, to be quite honest. The theme we tried to address was: What is the threat? And how can we best address it?

We concluded that the prime threats are, No. 1, the use of a weapon of mass destruction against our Nation. I intend to talk about that issue later on as we move into the new BioShield bill, which has been put together by Senator BURR from North Carolina. He has done such an extraordinary job. This bill did make major initiatives in the area of trying to fight the use of a weapon of mass destruction and getting prepared to deal with that type of a threat.

The second major threat we determined was the porousness of our borders. The simple fact is too many people are coming into this country today whom we don't know, and they are coming in illegally. Not only that, but we don't know, when people come across the border legally, who they are and what their purposes are and whether they may be wanting to cause us harm.

We have two major problems. We have the problem relative to people. In addition, we have the problem relative to cargo. The fact is, our ports of entry are basically open to allowing in cargo that may be a threat to us, cargo which might have in it a weapon which might be used against us.

So this bill reallocated resources, and we made some very difficult decisions. We took significant resources from other accounts, where it could arguably be claimed they were needed, but

we decided, in the elements of priority, it was more important to move the funds into the border issues and move those dollars to the border.

We expanded—working in the context of a continuum because we had done a supplemental earlier which attempted to address the same issues as part of a package—working as a theme, the issue of protecting our borders and making them more secure. We did this by significantly expanding the number of feet on the ground because when you come right down to it, it is how many people you have on the borders looking for people who are trying to come across the borders illegally which determines whether you are going to be successful in stopping those people.

So we expanded by 15 percent, approximately, the number of Border Patrol agents. Now, this is only a step in the right direction, but it is a fairly significant step. Some would say: Why didn't you put even more Border Patrol agents into the system? Well, quite honestly, the system cannot handle it. We do not have the training capacity to train more than about 1,500 Border Patrol agents every year. Unfortunately, it is very hard to find people to do this job who meet the qualifications we have because the qualifications are very high and the people who do this job of serving in our Border Patrol agency are individuals who are highly sought after by other agencies and they are people who have other opportunities. To attract them into the Border Patrol agency is a challenge. Finding people is a challenge. But we have put in the pipeline now the dollars necessary to add 1,500 new agents.

In addition, we are expanding the training facilities so that as we move into the later years, we will be able to train more than 1,500 agents a year. My goal—and I believe the goal of other members of the committee, some of whom are in the Chamber today—is to be training approximately 2,000 new agents every year, until we get to 10,000 new agents from the baseline of about 10,000. So we will have essentially a force we have doubled.

But as you double the force of agents, you also have to double the infrastructure that supports them, or dramatically increase it, anyway. So this bill also addresses that. It builds new facilities. And especially it addresses the issue of detention, which is a critical issue for us because we simply know today that as we catch people who come into our country who are not Mexican and whose purposes we don't know but who we know are here illegally, we are not able to detain them.

We are not able to send them back to their country of origin because we do not have the capacity to do so. This bill, again, tries to address that issue and does so in a fairly aggressive way, adding, when coupled with the supplemental, approximately 2,000 new beds to detention capability, getting us over 20,000 beds in detention capability. Our goal—and we are on this path now—is

to be sure that we can detain everybody who comes into this country illegally and we catch who is not Mexican and be able to send those people back to where they came from because those people may be a significant threat to us as a nation.

We are making progress. The Congress and the President have made a commitment to significantly increase our capacity to protect our borders. We recognize that there is a porousness among our borders, and we have stepped up, in an attempt to try to address that, by dramatically expanding the resources we are putting on the borders and dramatically expanding the support facilities for those border agents who are there.

There are other issues that we still need to address: Specifically, our computer capability as to how we track legal people who come into the country and our capacity to have the various computer systems which are able to track people—the FBI system at IAFIS and the US-VISIT system set up by Customs and Immigration—be able to communicate in a way which makes it possible for us to identify somebody coming into this country who might have a criminal record or for purposes which we believe could harm our Nation or individuals in our Nation.

There is a long way to go in that area. We intend to continue to focus a great deal of energy and resources on that also. I intend to hold hearings specifically on that point because I am very concerned about it. This bill, which passed the Senate and passed the House and was signed by the President this week, called the Homeland Security appropriations bill, was a significant step in the right direction toward making our borders more secure. It is a step which should be acknowledged and, therefore, I wanted to come to the floor to note it again.

I thank the Chair and the Senator from Michigan for her courtesy.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MURKOWSKI). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

TRANSPORTATION, TREASURY, THE JUDICIARY, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3058, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3058) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, Treasury, and Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, District of Columbia, and independent agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reed amendment No. 2077, to provide for appropriations for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Dorgan amendment No. 2133, to restrict enforcement of the Cuban Assets Control Regulations with respect to travel to Cuba.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Madam President, my colleague from Michigan has an amendment that is a good amendment. Let me say that my colleague from Washington, Senator MURRAY, and I are hoping to finish business today. I know there are a number of amendments out there that people wish to bring up. We have been able to accept a significant number of them. If you have an amendment pending, please come down this morning and talk to us. I hope we will stay around however long it takes to finish up all of these matters and have a final vote. This bill has to go to conference, if we are to provide 2006 appropriations for the very important agencies covered by this legislation. This is going to be a difficult bill to conference, and we must have this bill finished, ready for the floor, I would hope before the end of this month so that they can get out from under a continuing resolution. But we must get it finished before Thanksgiving. It is vitally important. I urge Members to come to the floor. If they don't want to act on all of their amendments, that will be fine with us. We need to get this bill finished.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE HOUSTON ASTROS

On a personal note, I conclude by saying our congratulations to the Houston Astros, who are a magnificent team. They did well. We are looking forward to a great battle between them and the White Sox, a central time zone World Series which many of us in the heartland think is going to be good. The St. Louis Cardinals were magnificent for over 100 games. But Busch Stadium, twice now, has failed us in October. We are going forward today, blowing up the stadium, and I wish I were there to participate. But I wish my colleagues the best, and we are ready to go.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

AMENDMENT NO. 2149

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the pending amendments are set aside. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Michigan [Ms. STABENOW] proposes an amendment numbered 2149.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide resources to the Administration so that the Administration can enforce existing trade agreements and obligations related to trade violations involving currency manipulation, counterfeiting of manufactured products, and pirating of intellectual property)

On page 277, line 18, strike "activities;" and insert the following: "activities; pursu-

ant to section 3004(b) of the Exchange Rates and International Economic Policy Coordination Act of 1988 (22 U.S.C. 5304(b)), not to exceed \$1,000,000 is for the Secretary of the Treasury, in conjunction with the President, to implement said subsection as it pertains to Governments and trade violations involving currency manipulation and other trade violations;"

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I rise to thank both our distinguished chairman of this subcommittee, Senator BOND, and distinguished ranking member, Senator MURRAY, for their leadership on this important bill and for their words of support for my amendment.

This amendment addresses the need to make sure that we are enforcing our trade laws so that we have a level playing field for businesses and workers in America with all of our trading partners. It designates and authorizes a specific amount of money that would allow us to do that.

In my home State of Michigan, this is absolutely critical for us right now, as we see all of the challenges in the international marketplace. We need to make sure that we are giving every business, every worker, a level playing field, and we are doing everything we can to enforce our trade laws so that we have the opportunity to be exporting our products and not our jobs.

That should be the goal of all of us. I appreciate the fact that there is a willingness to support my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Madam President, I thank my colleague from Michigan. We worked with her on her original amendment. I think this amendment is now a good amendment. Obviously, the objective is one that we all share, and I believe with this modification, the concept that my colleague has put forth is a good one. We are willing to accept it on this side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, this amendment is acceptable on our side as well. We are ready to go forward at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2149.

The amendment (No. 2149) was agreed to.

Mr. BOND. Madam President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mrs. MURRAY. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, if there is not someone else wishing to speak, I will expand on what is happening as it relates to Michigan now and why this is so important as an amendment.

I thank colleagues for working with us and helping us to modify the amendment and to accept it today.

What is important for all of us, but particularly in Michigan now, as we are the heart and soul of manufacturing, is, as we see our President, our