

child victims. Shasta and Dylan's father said:

There's been so many times I've seen the news announce sex offenders being released into the community. People need to contact their Congressmen, their Senators, and even the President. There's a lot more that can be done.

I would like to tell Mr. Groene that we are listening. We hear your plea and the pleas of so many other Americans who want to see these monsters dealt with.

We are going to act. We will act. We must protect America's children, families, and neighborhoods from these sick predators. Our children are depending on us to keep them safe from the evils that lurk in the shadows.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

45TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACE CORPS

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and honor the achievements of the Peace Corps.

This year marks the 45th Anniversary of the Peace Corps. Over the last 45 years, the Peace Corps has been one of the enduring symbols of America abroad. The Peace Corps has helped create opportunities and hope for people throughout the developing world as it has projected a positive image of America.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps to promote world peace and friendship. Since then, over 182,000 Peace Corps volunteers have served in 138 countries. These volunteers have provided extensive assistance and expertise in agriculture production, business development, education, healthcare, and resource conservation—making significant improvements in the lives of individuals and communities around the world.

As we continue to face the challenges of the 21st Century, the mission of the Peace Corps is more vital than ever. Volunteers continue to offer support and development assistance to countries around the world. They are finding common ways to address global challenges such as endemic poverty and HIV/AIDS.

Today, Peace Corps volunteers, including 50 from my State of Nebraska,

bring their communities an enhanced understanding of foreign cultures and traditions, building bridges of friendship between people that transcend borders, language, and religion.

I congratulate the Peace Corps on its 45 years of achievement and accomplishment and thank the over 182,000 Peace Corps volunteers—including our Senate colleague CHRIS DODD for their good work and important contributions to making a better world.

Thank you.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

• Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the Peace Corps on its 45th Anniversary.

In his Presidential campaign in 1960, a great hero of mine, President John F. Kennedy, challenged a group of students at the University of Michigan to serve their country by volunteering their time and energies to citizens in developing countries. From those humble beginnings soon emerged the Peace Corps which, for the last 45 years, has been one of the most valuable and unique institutions of American foreign policy.

Since its establishment in 1961, over 182,000 Peace Corps volunteers have served in 138 countries throughout the world. Today, the Peace Corps remains as strong and popular as ever with the number of volunteers in service at a 30-year high. Currently some 7,810 volunteers, including 25 from my home State of Delaware, are working in 75 countries across the globe.

These increased numbers of volunteers have done invaluable work in recent years. Hundreds of Peace Corps volunteers, for instance, have been enlisted in the global fight against HIV/AIDS. The Peace Corps is active in 9 of the 15 Emergency Plan countries identified in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, PEPFAR. In addition, volunteers have continued lending their expertise to traditional areas such as environmental conservation, education, food production, and health care.

Over the past year, the innovative Crisis Corps—which draws on former Peace Corps volunteers for short-term emergency and humanitarian assistance—has allowed hundreds of volunteers to assist in tsunami relief efforts in Sri Lanka and Thailand. And in recent months, the Crisis Corps was deployed to the gulf region in the wake of Hurricane Katrina—the first time Peace Corps volunteers have ever been called to serve on U.S. soil.

Through the goodwill and service of its volunteers, the Peace Corps also plays a vital role in our public diplomacy efforts. Volunteers give a human face to the term "American," bringing personal knowledge of our ideals and attitudes to communities all over the world. In doing so, they help to erode the deep misconceptions of the United States that exist in many cultures. Peace Corps volunteers are truly a top-

notch example of diplomacy through action.

Again, I congratulate the Peace Corps on its 45th anniversary, and convey my deep gratitude to its thousands of current and former volunteers for their service to our country. •

EDUCATION FLEXIBILITY PARTNERSHIP ACT

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I today speak on a bill I introduced, and which the Senate passed last night, to extend the Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999, Ed-Flex. My State of North Carolina is one of ten Ed-Flex states. As the citizens of North Carolina know well, gone are the days when an individual with just a high school diploma or GED could make a good living in industries such as textiles and furniture. For the future of North Carolina, it is imperative that we do all that we can to assist all students, regardless of background, reach high academic standards. Only through a strong public education system can we secure a bright economic future for individual citizens and for our communities.

Ed-Flex is a program that allows the Secretary of Education to delegate to states with strong assessment and accountability systems the authority to waive certain Federal education requirements that may, in certain instances, impede local efforts to reform and improve education. By allowing additional flexibility in their implementation of Federal programs, Ed-Flex is designed to help local districts and their schools implement the educational reforms needed to raise student academic achievement.

The Ed-Flex waivers in North Carolina are helping local school systems improve student achievement while meeting Federal No Child Left Behind requirements in a number of ways. Examples of how local schools and districts are using Ed-Flex to advance local reform strategies include: providing tutoring for low-achieving or at-risk students through coordinating Federal, state, and local services; developing more inclusive parent involvement initiatives; collaborating and planning with Head Start, developmental specialists, and faculty from local day care centers to facilitate a smoother transition and more appropriate placement of pre-K students; implementing a hands-on, inquiry-based science curriculum to promote critical thinking skills; providing for ongoing literacy group instruction that allows students to move into and out of the groups, as necessary, during the school year; and expanding afterschool science clubs and purchasing resources for afterschool programs.

Ed-Flex was first enacted as a demonstration program in 1994 as part of Goals 2000: Educate America Act. Initially, the Secretary of Education was authorized to designate six states as Ed-Flex demonstration states. The 1996 amendments to the Goals 2000 legislation authorized the granting of Ed-Flex

waiver authority to six additional states. On April 29, 1999, the Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999 was signed into law, providing all states that had rigorous assessment and accountability systems the opportunity to participate. Because of North Carolina's comprehensive assessment and statewide school accountability system, the ABCs, North Carolina became an Ed-Flex state on December 19, 2000.

Ed-Flex has played a vital role in North Carolina's educational system by allowing local school districts to have the increased flexibility they need in the implementation of various Federal education programs. I am proud of North Carolina's exceptional school accountability program. As a result of our strong accountability safeguards, the Ed-Flex Program is helping our schools to meet the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act. Continuing the Ed-Flex Program will further enhance the efforts of North Carolina local districts and schools to ensure that all students achieve academic proficiency. I thank my colleagues for their support of this important legislation.

AFRICAN UNION

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I wish to discuss the genocide in Darfur. While there have been many speeches given on this critical subject, I want to take a moment to talk about a subject that has all too often been overlooked—the efforts of the African Union, AU.

At present, the Bush administration is helping to spearhead discussion on how to absorb the African Union force in Darfur into a larger U.N. contingent with a far greater capacity to protect civilians. I wholeheartedly agree with the administration that the current formula for combating brutality in Darfur is insufficient. In fact, in December, Senator BROWNBACK and I wrote an op-ed in the Washington Post advocating this very course of action.

At the same time, many government officials, and outside observers, have given little regard to the efforts of the African Union Mission in Sudan, AMIS.

We must start reversing this trend. I tip my hat to AMIS for its strong efforts, under the most difficult of circumstances, over the course of the last 2 years.

The AU leadership, along with individual troop contributing countries—such as Rwanda, Senegal, and Nigeria—made a decision to put African lives on the line when the campaign of terror waged against civilians was at its height. The AU leadership just as easily could have said “it's too difficult, it's too dangerous, this is somebody else's problem.”

Instead, they took action.

In a geographically diverse and inhospitable terrain, the AU built its operations—the most complex in the organization's history—from scratch, at a time when thousands of Darfurian civilians were being ethnically cleansed every month.

Although AMIS has just 5,000 troops and 2,000 observers and police spread out over a region the size of France, it has made a difference. Civilians on the ground in Darfur have reported that, where AU forces are present, they feel safer. An estimated 2 million civilians are now living in camps. These civilians depend on humanitarian aid for their survival, and aidworkers report that their convoys would not be able to navigate key areas without the invaluable escorts supplied by AMIS.

As security has deteriorated in Darfur over the last 4 months, lightly armed AMIS troops are increasingly the targets of assault, kidnapping, and murder.

Mr. President, has AMIS been a perfect mission? No. Is there room for improvement? Yes. But, I know that those of us in the Senate who follow this issue closely support what the AU is doing and want the AU to do more of it.

In July, I traveled to the United Nations and met with representatives of the AU and their member-states. There is no question that it is a young organization in need of capacity-building. But, I sensed that there was great resolve to ensure AMIS succeeded.

Moving forward, I think it is important to recognize that the AMIS has been an important first step for the AU. At the same time, I think there is widespread recognition—belatedly in my view—that the genocide in Darfur is an international, not only an African, issue.

I will use an analogy, albeit an imperfect one, with U.S. efforts in Afghanistan. While the United States is heavily involved in this nation, I believe that this is a situation with international ramifications; a key reason that the international community should be doing more to help stabilize this nation.

The same holds true for Darfur, where the challenges presented by a savage conflict spilling across international borders outstrip the resources currently in place to effectively deal with it. The United Nations and NATO should become more active.

This is not to take anything away from the efforts of the AU, who stepped in on their own to try to fill the security vacuum in Darfur. The AU will be indispensable in the coming year at a time when security conditions are deteriorating, but before additional troops can be deployed. As discussions progress about follow-on forces, it is clear that those same African countries leading the current AU efforts in Darfur will be the essential core of any successor mission.

In my view, it is essential that the United States government take the lead in rallying for AMIS the financial, military, and political support it needs to continue its essential work in Darfur and to transform itself into the backbone of a larger, more mobile UN mission.

Again, I thank the AU for its efforts and believe now more than ever that

African leadership will be key to international success in Darfur.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBERT L. SCOTT, JR.

• Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise today to express my deep sorrow over the passing of a great American leader and one of my personal heroes, BG Robert L. Scott, Jr. I first met General Scott in 1993. I became an instant fan of this amazing man. We became good friends sharing many hours of stories about his life and his love for America. It was only 2 weeks ago that I spoke at the General Robert L. Scott Heritage Society dinner. General Scott very kindly used to sign copies of his book “God Is My Co-Pilot” for my military academy cadets. He never failed as a great ambassador and host to my wife Julie-Anne and her schoolchildren when she used to bring them to the Air Force Museum in Warner Robins, GA. The Museum of Aviation at Robins Air Force base has done a fine job capturing the life of this great man that I would like to speak about today.

BG Robert L. Scott, Jr., world renowned World War II “fighter ace” and author of the 1943 book “God Is My Co-Pilot,” has gone to see his co-pilot. The spirited adventurer, who flew fighter missions with the “Flying Tigers” in China, passed away quietly on February 27 at the age of 97. Known to his friends and family as “Scotty,” the retired general lived his final two decades as the champion and cheerleader of the Museum of Aviation in Warner Robins, GA.

General Scott's lifetime story and flying career is legendary. A West Point graduate, he amassed over 33,000 flying hours in 60 years of flying. Official Army Air Force records credit him with 18 aerial victories, but according to General Scott it was really 22, making him one of the top Air Force “aces” of World War II.

Born on April 12, 1908, General Scott grew up in Macon, GA. He graduated from Lanier High School in 1928. The summer between his junior and senior years of high school, he took a job as deck boy aboard a Black Diamond Line freighter and sailed halfway around the world. It was the beginning of a lifetime of adventure.

General Scott's lifelong ambition was to fly. At age 12, he flew a home-built glider off the roof of a three story house in Macon, and crashed landed amid the spikes of a Cherokee rose bush—the State flower of Georgia. As General Scott tells the story, “Gliders were built out of spruce, but I didn't have enough money, so I made mine out of knotty pine. I cleared the first Magnolia, but then the main wing strut broke and I came down in Mrs. Napier's rose bushes. It's the only plane I ever crashed.”