

cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here." This statement is just as true today as it was nearly 150 years ago, as I am certain that the impact of Will's actions will live on far longer than any record of these words.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Willard M. Powell in the official record of the United States Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy, and peace. When I think about this just cause in which we are engaged, and the unfortunate pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope that Will's family can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Will.

TRAGEDY IN GREECE

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I wish to take a moment to recognize the people of the Republic of Greece who have demonstrated great bravery in the midst of terrible tragedy this summer. More than 5 people have died in the fires ravaging Greece during the past month. The scope of these fires is shocking. The flames showed no mercy to the elderly, young children, or the treasures of antiquity. Our sympathy and condolences go out to the families of the dozens of people who have died as a result of this tragedy and to the many people driven from their homes by the disaster.

As in New Orleans after Katrina, or in the wake of any terrible disaster, emergency aid is critical, but focus on the long-term needs of the victims is essential. The Greek people have responded bravely to the crisis. I understand that the Government of the United States has provided assistance and is in the process of working with the Greek Government, Greek-American organizations, and the Greek Orthodox Church to determine what those needs are. I urge the administration to continue to demonstrate our commitment to our Greek allies in the wake of these horrific events. Our allies can and should rightly judge us by our concern and commitment for them in times of adversity. Greece has been there for us; America must be there for Greece.

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

SUSTAINED LEADERSHIP IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

• Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, as President Bush arrives in Sydney to take

part in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, APEC, leaders meeting, it is appropriate to take stock of America's role in the Asia-Pacific region.

America's future prosperity and security is directly tied to Asia. The region contains the world's fastest growing major economies, largest militaries, largest energy consumers and importers, and biggest contributors to global climate change. Some of the most critical items on our international agenda—such as ending North Korea's nuclear weapons program, developing ties to moderate Muslim states, building a sound global economy, achieving energy security, combating climate change, and responding to pandemic disease—are impossible to achieve without robust U.S. partnerships and sustained engagement in Asia.

But despite the region's obvious importance, we have lost ground over the past seven years. The war in Iraq that should never have been authorized or waged has been an enormous distraction from the fight against al-Qaida, which has reconstituted itself in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In addition to the enormous costs in lives and resources, the war has also set back our standing and leadership in the world, and made it far more difficult for America to lead on critical issues. In Asia, a region that both wants and expects United States' leadership, this inattention has led to a decline in U.S. prestige and influence and has placed our national security interests in jeopardy.

While America has been increasingly absent in Asia, China has promoted itself as an alternative to U.S. leadership. And with fundamental shifts in Asia's security and economy underway—a rising China, emerging India, a Japan seeking to become a more "normal" and assertive nation, and North Korea and South Korea presenting dangers and opportunities the United States cannot afford to stay on the sidelines.

U.S. engagement is vital to maintaining the balance, and therefore peace, among potentially competing powers. In particular, the rise of China requires a clear-sighted view of our interests. A policy that seeks cooperation with China on security, economic, energy and environmental issues, maintains our military strength in the western Pacific, and strengthens our ability to compete must be a foundation of any successful policy.

While APEC may be primarily an economic forum, it also offers the opportunity to engage all the region's leaders in a single setting—and to further our agenda across the range of key challenges. Too often, the U.S. has missed this opportunity.

North Korea's nuclear ambitions already have had a profound impact on the region, and we must work to achieve a complete and verifiable elimination of all the DPRK's nuclear weapons capabilities and programs. I welcome the recent statement that

North Korea will declare and disable its nuclear programs by the end of the year. For far too long, the administration's disdain for diplomacy allowed the threat from North Korea to grow. While clearly the best time to negotiate with North Korea would have been before it tested a nuclear weapon, we must now verify North Korean compliance with their commitments. This will demand principled, aggressive, direct and sustained American diplomacy and leadership in the region.

To build support against terrorists and prevail in the long-term battle against violent extremism, the U.S. must work closely with Asia, and Southeast Asia in particular, to develop effective strategies that both prevent acts of terrorism and root out al-Qaida elements. In addition to cooperative military, intelligence, and law enforcement efforts, this will require recognition that our relationships in the region are more complex and multidimensional than a narrow approach to counterterrorism. We should use the opportunity of the APEC forum to explore new initiatives to increase political, diplomatic, economic, educational, and cultural engagement.

In terms of our shared prosperity, nowhere is America's sustained leadership more important in ensuring that the global economy remains vibrant. Together the economies of the APEC region account for over half the world's output and trade. It is essential that Asian countries work with us to ensure balanced growth and openness of the global trading system. This means shifting away from their traditional dependence on export-led growth and weak currencies toward stronger consumption at home and greater absorption of imports. The United States should negotiate only "gold standard" agreements with our Asian trading partners that stimulate growth and jobs and contain binding labor and environmental standards and intellectual property protections.

With the nations of East Asia working together through ASEAN, the ASEAN Regional Forum, APEC, the East Asia Summit and other regional arrangements, Asia is moving ahead—with or without us—to create a new regional architecture. Our interests demand that we re-engage to ensure trans-Pacific linkages are relevant and strong. That means developing new arrangements to meet new and rising challenges and transnational threats that stem from globalization—especially in the areas of pandemic disease, climate change, and energy security. The latest pandemic, an unidentified, highly contagious virus affecting pigs, is sweeping Asia. We must ensure that China and other affected countries cooperate in research and containing this and future outbreaks of disease. We should use the opportunity of APEC to further the dialogue about the growing problem of pandemics.

On climate change and energy, the U.S. and Asia face many of the same

challenges, and we ought to capitalize on those areas where our interests intersect. We have a mutual interest, for instance, in assuring adequate oil supplies, preventing disruptions in oil and gas exporting states and in the sea lanes, promoting greater efficiency, developing and expanding clean sources of energy, coordinating build-up and release of strategic stockpiles to prevent price spikes during supply emergencies, and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases. The time is ripe for U.S. leadership on a serious and comprehensive energy and climate initiative in Asia that would ramp-up the development and deployment of efficiency-related technologies, establish an adequate research and development fund for carbon sequestration and related technologies, increase opportunities for U.S. businesses to capture a share of the region's burgeoning clean energy market, and create a forum to address supply security-related concerns.

We will not be able to fight global climate change effectively unless the United States is able to lead the world toward a post-Kyoto Protocol framework that includes binding limits on the large projected growth in greenhouse gas emissions from China, India, and other Asian countries. The Bush administration's prolonged refusal to confront the challenges of climate change at home has robbed the United States of its ability to lead effectively in such efforts abroad. We should use the opportunity of APEC to discuss a new, comprehensive energy initiative in Asia to address the twin challenges of energy security and climate change.

The U.S. also should work with its Asian partners to strengthen democracy. Nowhere is the need for building consensus more pressing than in Burma. Peaceful pro-democracy activists continue to put their lives on the line for freedom, and democratic nations should stand in solidarity with them. U.S. leadership is vital to any regional effort to press the military junta to achieve national reconciliation.

The U.S. must resume an active leadership role in Asia. We cannot sit on the sidelines. We have too much at stake in Asia, in terms of our prosperity, security, energy, and health. If we are to protect and advance these interests, America must be a reliable and engaged partner. It is good that President Bush is traveling to Sydney for APEC, and I know we all wish him success at this important summit. But the time has long since passed to pursue a new path that reflects the importance of Asia to our national interests and enables the United States to play a greater and appropriate leadership role in the region. We cannot afford any more missed opportunities.●

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO COBB ENERGY PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

● Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, today I wish to honor in the RECORD the grand opening of the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre.

The Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre is the first major performing arts facility built in metro Atlanta in four decades and upon opening will immediately become the new home of the Atlanta Opera.

A great deal of planning has gone into the development of this state-of-the-art landmark on Atlanta's horizon by great friends and community leaders such as Earl Smith, Travis Duke, Johnny Gresham, Max Bacon, Bill Dunaway, Sam Olens, Robert Voyles, and Michele Swann. Special gratitude also goes to John Williams, a great benefactor and the namesake of this grand 2,750-seat theatre.

The arts are an essential ingredient for the quality of life of a community and the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre will improve the quality of life not just for the community of Cobb but for the entire metropolitan Atlanta region and the Southeastern United States.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure and it is a privilege to recognize on the floor of the Senate the grand opening of the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre. I congratulate the community on this wonderful new crown jewel.●

CONGRATULATING THE BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

● Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I speak today to congratulate the Bridgeport Public School System, which for the second year in a row has been selected as a finalist for the Broad Prize for Urban Education. The \$1 million Broad Prize, the largest education prize given to school districts, is awarded each year to honor urban school districts that demonstrate the greatest overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps for poor and minority students.

That Bridgeport has been nominated for this award 2 years in a row speaks volumes about the progress Bridgeport has made educating its students. The city's schools serve the highest percentage of low-income students in Connecticut, with 95 percent of its students eligible for either free or reduced-price school lunches. Yet in 2006, Bridgeport students outperformed their peers in demographically similar districts in the State in reading and math at all grade levels. In fact, Bridgeport is the only one of those school districts to improve in reading and math at all grade levels from 2003 to 2006. This improvement was seen across all subgroups of students, including low-income, African-American and Hispanic students.

The city has also done a remarkable job in closing the achievement gap between White and minority students. Bridgeport has reduced achievement gaps between Hispanic students and their White peers in high school reading and math, as well as in elementary school reading, and the district has reduced achievement gaps for African-American students in high school math. In addition, Bridgeport has closed the Hispanic achievement gap faster than the State average in elementary and high school reading and high school math. This is no small feat, considering that almost 90 percent of the district's students are racial minorities.

The Broad Foundation has praised the district's willingness to take a hard look at the data it collects on student performance, and using it to identify where it is succeeding and where it needs to improve. In fact, Bridgeport uses this data to put together quarterly assessments that are tightly aligned to State standards. Data from these assessments is available in real time, allowing for immediate diagnostics and subsequent adjustments. Given the proliferation of data, administrators and teachers have become more comfortable using it and district administrators have reported that school principals have been using the data to determine their schools' needs and plans. Teachers have also reported that they too analyze the data when meeting together in teams to determine their strengths and weaknesses.

This results-based approach, where the main focus is on student performance, has so far been a rousing success. I would like to congratulate Superintendent John J. Ramos, Sr., and all the teachers, principals, administrators, and other school personnel of the Bridgeport public schools not just for the nomination, but for all the hard work they have done to provide a better education to their students. They have proven that it is possible to give all children a fair opportunity to receive a high-quality education. May other districts follow their example.●

SWEARING IN OF MAURICE DUBÉ

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, today I honor Maurice "Moe" Dubé whom I had the privilege to on August 14 welcome home to Maine and officially swear in as Maine's district director of the U.S. Small Business Administration, SBA. I was incredibly honored to be able to celebrate Moe's appointment with him and his family in Lewiston-Auburn, where both of our roots run so deep.

Moe's return to Maine is wonderful news for the numerous small businesses and manufacturers in our state who depend on the SBA and the valuable programs it administers. In my capacity as the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I have had the