

It is a shame that some consider it "the best we can do" to avoid massively expanding a "temporary" government program. I believe we can do better; we can hold people to their word and say enough is enough.

LEBANON

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, every so often a defining moment arrives, capable of dramatically altering the future of a Nation and its people. The country of Lebanon, which will hold its Presidential elections as soon as November 21, is on the brink of one of these moments.

Lebanon is a country whose vision for a socially rich, prosperous, and democratic future could serve as a model for what we hope to see in the Middle East region. Yet in spite of the courageous and unwavering will of the Lebanese people, extremist forces led by Syria, Iran, and terrorist groups—primarily Hezbollah—conspire to undermine the democratic majority in Lebanon and remake the country in their own oppressive image.

Ever since Lebanon's Cedar Revolution in 2005, when a third of the Lebanese people flooded the streets in peaceful protest against Syria's foreign domination, Lebanon has struggled to remain on the path to peace and democracy.

The cultural and media capital of the Arab world, Lebanon is comprised of a uniquely rich social and religious fabric where Christians, Sunnis, and Shias live in relative harmony. Polling data from Lebanon indicates that the majority of the Lebanese people desire an independent and stable country, free from Syrian and Iranian influence. They want the militias, including Hezbollah, disarmed, and they want an international tribunal to investigate the assassinations of Rafiq Hariri and other members of their Parliament.

On November 21, the Lebanese Parliament is scheduled to meet to elect the country's next President, an event which will serve as a harbinger for the future of independence and democracy in the Middle East. The stakes could not be higher—a fact that has not been lost on Syria and Iran and that certainly must not be lost on us.

Desperate to regain its lost foothold in Lebanon, Syria has adopted the macabre strategy of systematically assassinating members of the March 14th parliamentary majority, the embodiment of the Cedar Revolution's ideals. This tactic is designed to ensure the election of a President sympathetic to Syrian hegemony. As the election date approaches, Lebanon's prodemocracy members of Parliament have been forced to enter complete seclusion in Beirut's Phoenicia Hotel. They cannot go outside, or even look out of windows, for fear of a sniper's bullet.

If we are committed to ensuring a free and democratic future for the Middle East, safe from terror and extremism, we must not remain silent or

passive about the need to ensure that the constitutional Presidential election process in Lebanon remains untainted by foreign meddling and coercion by terrorist groups like Hezbollah. We must be unequivocally clear in our support for our March 14 allies in Lebanon.

I commend Secretary of State Rice for her recent statement that "any candidate for president or any president [of Lebanon] needs to be committed to Lebanon's sovereignty and independence, needs to be committed to resolutions that Lebanon has signed on to . . . and needs to be committed to carrying on the tribunal." I also strongly agree when she says that "the March 14 majority should not be put in a position of having to accept either extra-constitutional measures or measures that would undermine the program that they stand for."

In light of the precarious situation in Lebanon, we must ensure that the United States will not support anything less than the untainted election of a constitutionally legitimate President in Lebanon.

We must make clear to the regimes in Syria and Iran, in no uncertain terms, that the United States will not support a puppet President that seeks to thwart the will of the Lebanese people, nor will the United States remain silent in the face of the spread of militant Islamic extremism.

We must not allow Lebanon to be dragged back into chaos and war. Lebanon's enemies should understand that we are fully dedicated to Lebanon's future as a model for independent and sovereign democracy in the Middle East. We cannot abandon the Lebanese people and our shared ideals at this critical moment. The stakes are simply too high—for Lebanon, for the Middle East, and for us.

TODAY'S ARMS RACE

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the danger involved in combating crime in our Nation is escalating. Police departments across the country are being forced into a dangerous arms race with criminals and gangs. Increasingly confronted with assault rifles capable of firing up to 600 rounds per minute, law enforcement officers have been forced to carry military-style arms in order to counter such criminal firearm supremacy.

Recently, tensions have increased throughout south Florida's police departments after three Miami-Dade police officers were wounded and another killed by a man using an assault weapon. In a recent interview with CNN, Sergeant Laurie Pfeil, who supervises a sheriff's road patrol in Palm Beach County, stated that, "It's not nice we have to arm ourselves like the soldiers in Iraq. We are like soldiers. It is a war."

Over 60 police officers have been gunned down so far this year in the United States. According to Robert

Tessaro, the associate director for law enforcement relations for the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, we are currently on pace to set an alltime high. "We're having more than one officer shot and killed a week. It's just outrageous that officers are being targeted. It's something all Americans should be outraged about." Like many others, he lays the blame for this increase on the expiration of the assault weapons ban.

"It's different now. It's shootings on a weekly basis. Ten years ago, that just didn't happen. They don't get out and run from us anymore. They stop, and they're shooting at us," Sergeant Pfeil went on to say. "They don't have .38s anymore. They have AK-47s . . . They have automatic weapons now."

Miami Chief of Police John Timoney said he began noticing a significant increase in the use of automatic weapons used in crimes dating from the time the assault weapons ban was permitted to lapse. This increase includes an 18 percent increase last year and 20 percent increase this year.

The 1994 assault weapons ban prohibited the sale of 19 of the highest powered and most lethal firearms produced. Additionally, it prohibited the sale of semiautomatic weapons that incorporated a detachable magazine and two or more specific military features. These features included folding telescoping stocks, threaded muzzles or flash suppressors, protruding pistol grips, bayonet mounts, barrel shrouds, or grenade launchers.

I voted to establish the assault weapons ban, and 10 years later I joined a bipartisan majority of the Senate in voting to extend the ban for another 10 years. Unfortunately, despite the overwhelming support of the law enforcement community, the ongoing threat of terrorism, and bipartisan support in the Senate, neither President Bush nor the Republican congressional leadership acted to protect Americans from assault weapons like the one used in the attack on the Miami-Dade police officers. As a result, police officers across the country are being forced to counter previously banned military-style assault weapons.

This Congress, as in previous ones, I will once again cosponsor the reinstating the assault weapons ban. Congress must take up and pass this piece of sensible gun safety legislation to aid our law enforcement agencies and to help prevent such tragedies from occurring in the future.

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

17TH ANNUAL COVENANT HOUSE CANDLELIGHT VIGIL FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

• Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, on November 15, 2007, Covenant House will mark their 17th annual Candlelight Vigil for Homeless Youth. This Vigil will bring together individuals from

more than 500 sites throughout North America to keep the light of hope burning for homeless youth. Covenant House provides quality, effective care for homeless and runaway youth and we are proud that our State of New York is home to Covenant House's headquarters.

Emergency health care, shelter, and treatment of the homeless in New York City cost an average of \$40,000 per person each year, placing a staggering and unsustainable social and economic burden on State and local governments. Covenant House, the Nation's largest privately funded agency for homeless youth and young adults, is helping to relieve some of this burden by providing resident and non-resident services to nearly 66,000 youths in 2006 alone.

Covenant House has provided more than 1 million young people with the support necessary to transition from life on the streets to a life with a future. Covenant House uses successful programs and services—including counseling, transitional living programs, educational and vocational training, health services, and drug abuse treatment and prevention programs—that help transform the lives of these individuals at an early stage.

Still, more work needs to be done. As we speak, nearly 1.3 million children and young adults are homeless and living on the streets throughout our Nation, with roughly 5,000 of these youth dying from assault, illness, or suicide. The Candlelight Vigil for Homeless Youth will honor the memory of these young people who have died alone and anonymously while living on our streets and raise awareness about growing crisis of youth homelessness. As Sister Tricia, executive director of Covenant House, has said, "The Vigil is for every kid who runs away, convinced they'll be safer on the street than at home, where they hope to escape abusive or dangerous environments. That's why we stand together with candles, to light their way to Covenant House, where they will be safe, treated with dignity and loved without condition."

Many of the youth living and dying on our Nation's streets are former foster care children who have aged out of the system. Though they are too old for the foster care system, they are often too young and ill prepared for self-sufficient living without the assistance of a family or support system. Unemployment and a lack of education among these young people can lead to a life of poverty, crime, and drug abuse. The challenges facing young men and women today are overwhelming. For youth who are faced with a life on the streets, the need for a guiding light is often a matter of life and death.

The Covenant House has used successful programs to help transform the lives of these individuals at an early stage. Senator SCHUMER and I are pleased to stand with Covenant House as together we work to keep the light

of hope burning bright for all of our young people.●

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

VISIT OF THE JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER

● Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I rise to extend my welcome to Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda of Japan, who is visiting Washington today.

Japan is a critical ally and friend of the United States. I believe our alliance is fundamental to a peaceful and prosperous Asia-Pacific region.

The Prime Minister's visit comes at an important time. It is crucial that our two countries maintain the positive momentum in our relationship and work closely together to accomplish shared goals, such as denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, stability in South Asia, nonproliferation in Iran, and political reform in Burma. As a long-standing ally, we must consult closely and respect Japan's perspectives, even as we contemplate next steps in our negotiations with nations like North Korea.

Thousands of miles away from the Korean peninsula, we face the resurgence of the Taliban and al-Qaida in Afghanistan and in the border regions of Pakistan. We are all too familiar with the reports that suggest the Taliban and al-Qaida are gaining strength. We were reminded of this fact in an unsettling report in Tuesday's Washington Post, but the most troubling report of all was last July, when the declassified National Intelligence Estimate warned of a persistent and growing threat from a reconstituted al-Qaida sanctuary in northwest Pakistan.

It is therefore critical that the U.S. and its partners in the international community, including Japan, maintain our focus and operations in this region.

In particular, I wanted to extend to the Prime Minister my appreciation for the support that Japan's Self Defense Forces have offered U.S. operations in Afghanistan, and hope Japan's deployment of refueling tankers will quickly be reauthorized and be extended.

Our half century alliance with Japan remains vital, based on common values and shared interests. There is ample room for improved efforts to forge an even stronger and enduring global security partnership. I hope that Prime Minister Fukuda's visit will continue the progress toward that goal.●

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

IN RECOGNITION OF PROFESSORS OF THE YEAR

● Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate the four national winners of the U.S. Professors of the Year Award. Since 1981, this program has sa-

luted outstanding undergraduate instructors throughout the country. This year, a State Professor of the Year was also recognized in 40 States and the District of Columbia.

This award is recognized as one of the most prestigious honors bestowed upon a professor. To be nominated for this award requires dedication to the art of education and excellence in every aspect of the profession. Professors personally vested in each student shape the leaders of tomorrow. These individuals should be proud of their accomplishment.

I commend and thank all the winners for your leadership and passion for educating. No doubt you have inspired an untold number of students. I wish you the very best in all your endeavors. Congratulations and best regards.

The four national award winners are:

Outstanding Baccalaureate Colleges Professor of the Year: Glenn W. Ellis, associate professor of engineering, Smith College, Northampton, MA;

Outstanding Community Colleges Professor of the Year: Rosemary M. Karr, professor of mathematics, Collin County Community College, Plano, TX;

Outstanding Doctoral and Research Universities Professor of the Year: Christopher M. Sorensen, University Distinguished Professor of Physics, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS;

Outstanding Master's Universities and Colleges Professor of the Year: Carlos G. Spaht, professor of mathematics, Louisiana State University in Shreveport, Shreveport, LA.

State winners are:

Alabama: Lawrence Davenport, professor of biology, Samford University;

Arizona: John M. Lynch, honors faculty fellow, Arizona State University;

Arkansas: Jay Barth, associate professor of politics, Hendrix College;

California: Andrew Fraknoi, professor of astronomy, Foothill College;

Colorado: Thomas G. McGuire, associate professor of English and fine arts, U.S. Air Force Academy;

Connecticut: Marc Zimmer, Kohn professor of chemistry, Connecticut College;

District of Columbia: Richard P. Tollo, associate professor of geology, the George Washington University;

Florida: Patrick K. Moore, public history program director and associate professor, University of West Florida;

Georgia: Linda Stallworth Williams, associate professor of English, North Georgia College & State University;

Idaho: Heidi Reeder, associate professor of communication, Boise State University;

Illinois: Steven A. Meyers, professor of psychology, Roosevelt University;

Indiana: Kristen L. Mauk, Kreft professor of nursing, Valparaiso University;

Iowa: Gail Romberger Nonnecke, professor of horticulture, Iowa State University;

Kansas: David Littrell, university distinguished professor of music, Kansas State University;

Kentucky: Carol Holzhausen Hunt, professor of English and women's studies, Bluegrass Community and Technical College;

Louisiana: Carol E. O'Neil, Peltier professor of dietetics, Louisiana State University and A&M College;

Maine: Robert A. Strong, university foundation professor of investment education, University of Maine;