

to the Senate minority leader regarding the Global Food Security Act, S. 384, printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
May 27, 2010.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Senate Minority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR MCCONNELL: I recently objected to a unanimous consent request to pass S. 384, the Global Food Security Act.

As you will recall, I sent a letter to the entire Senate at the beginning of this Congress in which I outlined four basic principles that would give me cause to object to any legislation that violated them. Among them are the principles that any new spending commitment authorized must be paid for by reducing spending in other areas of the federal budget and that any new programs or initiatives should not duplicate existing ones.

Along these lines I have two primary concerns with S. 384. First, according to the Congressional Budget Office, this bill will cost taxpayers \$6.5 billion; yet, the legislation provides no offset to avoid increasing our national debt, which recently reached \$13 trillion.

Second, it appears several components of S. 384 may overlap with existing federal programs and authority relating to agricultural assistance and research. For example, S. 384 creates the Higher Education Collaboration for Technology, Agriculture, Research and Extension program (HECTARE), which authorizes research and teaching activities for academic exchanges for students, faculty, extension educators, and school administrators. However, according to the Congressional Research Service, this section overlaps with several programs at the Department of Agriculture (USDA). Specifically, USDA already has research, extension and teaching activities authorized in Section 1458 of the 2008 farm bill. Other farm bill programs, such as the Competitive Grants for International Science and Education Programs (Sec. 1459A), the Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellowship Program (Sec. 1473G), and the Cochran Agricultural Fellowship Program for Middle Income Countries, Emerging Democracies and Emerging Markets (Sec. 1543) also authorize USDA to carry out the kinds of activities that would be funded by the HECTARE program.

Additionally, this bill adds new provisions and authority for conservation farming and other sustainable agriculture techniques. At the same time, USAID already operates the Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program, which American universities carry out to support sustainable agriculture research and natural resource management internationally. USAID also operates the Consultative Group on Program, which American universities carry out to support sustainable agriculture research and natural resource management internationally. USAID also operates the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), which is an alliance of international agricultural centers that mobilizes science to benefit the poor by promoting conservation and sustainability of natural resources and biodiversity. Further, the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service conducts an International Technical Assistance program. Through this program, the U.S. provides technical assistance internationally to enhance conservation and management of natural resources. Finally, one

component of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service's mission is to provide food aid and technical assistance in foreign countries.

The statutory authorities to implement these initiatives already exist. Congress should conduct better management of programs already authorized rather than create new ones as outlined in S. 384. The past failures of Congress to streamline federal programs where appropriate have resulted in a vast expansion of our government, often to the detriment of taxpayers and in violation of the principles set forth in the U.S. Constitution.

During this time of national economic unrest, Congress must do the hard work of paying for its commitments rather than passing along debt to future generations and risking financial collapse. Additionally, Congress must first evaluate existing programs to eliminate or consolidate overlapping functions before it creates new programs or embarks on new initiatives.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have. Thank you for your service to our country.

Sincerely,

TOM A. COBURN,
U.S. Senator.

RECOGNIZING AMBASSADOR JEAN KENNEDY SMITH AND VSA

Mr. DODD. Madam President, I wish to recognize VSA, the International Organization on Arts and Disability. VSA is an affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and was founded in 1974 by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith—a pioneering leader in the area of access and inclusion in the arts for children with disabilities. For over three decades, she has blazed the trail for VSA to become the preeminent international organization on arts and disability. As a result of Ambassador Smith's tireless efforts and sustained vision, VSA is changing perceptions all over the world about people with disabilities. Each year, 7 million people of all ages and abilities participate in VSA programs in dance, music, drama and the visual arts.

Ambassador Smith and VSA have created an extraordinary network of educational resources, programs, festivals, and services that bring the arts into the lives of individuals of all ages—with and without disabilities. VSA programs occur in schools, community centers, hospitals, performing arts centers, art galleries, and college and university campuses. They involve teacher and artist training programs, the development and distribution of educational resources, and performance and exhibition opportunities for individuals of all ages. Through the development, implementation, and dissemination of model programs and initiatives, VSA helps acknowledge the importance of the arts in academic and vocational achievement for individuals of all abilities. These programs operate in all 50 states and in 51 countries around the world.

From June 6 to 12, more than 2,000 people will convene in Washington, DC, to celebrate Ambassador Smith's vision and to share their talents and accomplishments with all of us. From the

Kennedy Center, to the Smithsonian Institution, the Shakespeare Theatre Company, Union Station, AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center, and many venues in between, performances and exhibitions will showcase the work of these outstanding artists and provide first-rate entertainment to residents of the Washington metropolitan area as well as visitors from around the world.

Among the professional artists who will lend their talents to this extraordinary gathering are world-renowned artists Dale Chihuly, Dame Evelyn Glennie, Patti LaBelle, Salif Keita, Marlee Maitlin and architect Michael Graves.

As part of the festival, hundreds of educators, policymakers, parents, and disability advocates will convene for the International VSA Education Conference, which will feature sessions that provide participants with tools and resources to advance inclusive education in their own communities.

Countless individuals have worked tirelessly for many years to create and expand the diverse programming and rich history of VSA. The leadership that Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith has provided for more than 35 years has inspired those efforts and made these many accomplishments possible. The 2010 International VSA Festival is a tribute to her and to those individuals who embraced her vision and shared her passionate belief that all people should have the opportunity to participate in the arts. In honoring VSA and the work done by Ambassador Smith, we recognize the magnitude of her mission, and the importance of the arts not only for individuals with disabilities, but in all of our lives.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT EDWIN RIVERA

Mr. DODD. Madam President, today I have a heavy heart to mark the passing and commemorate the life of SSgt Edwin Rivera, a native of Waterford, CT, who lost his life in Afghanistan last week at the age of 28.

Staff Sergeant Rivera, the only son of middle-class Puerto Rican parents who came to Connecticut in the 1970s, graduated from Waterford High School in 2000. And they were proud of young Edwin, who served his first deployment in 2006, even as they missed his presence.

"The center of the family shifts back to my house when Edwin is gone," his mother said.

He was gone for 15 months, not the promised 12. And when he came home, he was changed by what he had seen. But he soon became the lively, committed family man, seeing his two sons, Rolando and Lorenzo, off to school, working at the Millstone nuclear powerplant, starting a new life with his wife Yesenia.

Last summer, however, he told his mother that he still thought about the sad faces of the children he had seen in Afghanistan, the children who couldn't

enjoy the stable, safe life he was providing for his own family.

"When the U.S. soldiers drive by," he told her, "the children will scramble like mad in the dust just to get thrown a simple pencil from us. They don't even have pencils. I was born for this, it's my duty, to protect those families over there."

So Edwin went back, leaving for Afghanistan again in early January with the 1st Battalion of the 102nd Infantry Regiment, a Connecticut National Guard unit based in New Haven. Like Edwin, many of those who went with him were not on their first deployment. But they fought with courage and commitment. And when Staff Sergeant Rivera made the ultimate sacrifice for his country, he did so in defense of his mates.

Staff Sergeant Rivera will be missed. But his selflessness, his commitment to his family, and his love of country will not be forgotten; rather, they will remain as an inspiration to his two young sons and to all of us who honor his service.

SOMALIA

Mr. FEINGOLD. Madam President, once again, I wish to express my concern about the situation in Somalia. To put it frankly, the situation is appalling. Since the start of fighting in 2007, at least 21,000 people have been killed and more than 1.5 million have been displaced. Thousands of refugees continue to pour into overcrowded camps in Kenya, Ethiopia, Yemen, and elsewhere. For those who remain in Somalia, the United Nations refugee and food agencies are unable to reach many of them because of the insecurity and threats to humanitarian staff. The terrorist group al Shebaab and other armed groups continue to wage war against the Transitional Federal Government, the TFG, in Mogadishu as well as against one another in an effort to expand their territorial control. Al Shebaab has resorted to using suicide bombings, most recently in an attack inside a mosque in Mogadishu, which killed dozens of civilians. Meanwhile, al Shebaab is employing increasingly brutal tactics to maintain its control over certain areas—carrying out executions, chopping off hands and legs, and forcibly conscripting youth.

Mr. President, we should be appalled at this situation, but we should also be concerned because of the direct ramifications for our national security. Al Shebaab's leadership has links to al-Qaida, and it has indicated, through public statements, that it intends to provide support to al-Qaida affiliates in Yemen. Even more disconcerting, it has recruited a number of Americans to travel to the region and fight with it. In October 2008, a Somali-American blew himself up in Somalia as part of a coordinated attack by al Shebaab, reportedly becoming the first known suicide bomber with U.S. citizenship. The Justice Department has since brought

terrorist charges against over a dozen people for recruiting and raising funds for Americans to fight with al Shebaab. Last September, the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Michael Leiter, testified that "the potential for al-Qaida operatives in Somalia to commission Americans to return to the United States and launch attacks against the Homeland remains of significant concern." Earlier this year, the New York Times reported that an American from Alabama, Omar Hammami, has become a key figure in al Shebaab. Just this past weekend, two other Americans, neither with family ties in Somalia, were arrested in New Jersey for allegedly planning to fight in Somalia with al Shebaab. This is very troublesome news and brings home the implications of Somalia's ongoing crisis.

The Obama administration has been right to refocus attention on Somalia—and to consider regional dynamics at the same time. I am also pleased that the administration has been clear in its support for the Djibouti peace process. I am, however, concerned that this process—as currently constituted—is not sufficient to unite Somalis and mitigate the ongoing crisis. As the situation there turns more dreadful, I worry that the process is becoming increasingly detached from events on the ground. Furthermore, we must acknowledge that while the administration continues to provide assistance—both materiel and diplomatic—to the TFG, we still do not have an overarching strategy for Somalia that ties our programs and policies together. As a result, we appear to be grasping at straws to "do something" while our national security increasingly hangs in the balance.

Under the previous administration, our approach toward Somalia lacked coherence and was shortsighted. This discord gave rise to conflicting agendas that undermined each other and our credibility. Without clear policy guidance, the current administration's efforts—however well intentioned—may fall into the same trap. There is great risk that by focusing too narrowly on tactical decisions we will continue to operate without a larger strategy.

Now, I understand in the early months of the administration there was an interagency effort to review our policy toward Somalia and the Horn of Africa. However, it is also my understanding that no overarching policy was established. Now is the time to renew such an effort, and as part of this initiative, we need some way to measure whether we are making progress. The administration has rightly pressed the TFG to broaden its appeal and strength, but we have seen no major improvement on that front. With the exception of its agreement with Ahlu Sunna wal Jama, the TFG has done little to expand its reach and undercut its opposition. The TFG has not become more inclusive, and it has not projected an attractive political vision

to counter that of armed opposition groups. As a result, it is not becoming more legitimate in the eyes of Somalis.

Going forward, we need clear guidance on what we expect to achieve with our support for the TFG, the Djibouti Process, and our efforts to weaken al Shebaab and provide humanitarian assistance. Without such a coordinated and measurable approach, we run the risk of continuing to fund the same initiatives with little progress made. Such an assessment is important not only so that American taxpayers know their money is being well spent, but also so we know our safety and security are being enhanced.

There are some thoughtful observers who believe that the best option for the United States might be to just disengage altogether and let this crisis play out. The stakes are too high to do that. However, these observers are right that a continuation of the status quo will only further entrench the crisis. The current efforts by the United States and the international community are insufficient to change the fundamental dynamics of the situation. We need to go back to the drawing board and develop a strategy with measurable goals and a clear plan of how we will reach them.

We also need to consider whether appointing a Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, to help create and drive policy, is once again appropriate. For years I have called for the creation of such a position—at a very senior level—but to no avail. I do believe that now is the time for this position to be considered particularly because of the direct national security implications, but also because the crisis in Somalia requires a regional approach. We need a senior official to regularly connect the dots between a number of countries in the region including Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, and Yemen in order to develop an effective strategy. In addition, having a senior envoy focused on addressing this crisis can help show the people of Somalia that we are finally serious about helping their efforts to achieve a future free of terror and conflict.

In thinking about how we fit counterterrorism concerns into a broader strategy, we must be practical. Mr. President, tactical operations against individuals and networks may be justified in some cases, especially if the targets have clear ties to al-Qaida and pose a direct threat to the United States. But we need to think hard about the strategic implications and potential risks of these operations because at the same time we need to reach out to, work with, and support all Somalis who seek a more stable and secure country. The perception that the United States is only interested in tactical counterterrorism operations in Somalia has generated suspicion among Somalis and fueled anti-Americanism. Not taking that into account when planning or authorizing any tactical operations is counter-productive.

Equally as important to our counterterrorism goals is the need to continue