

To extend PNTR to Russia, we had to repeal an out-of-date policy that was adopted during the Cold War; that is, the Jackson-Vanik amendment. I wish to speak briefly on the Senate floor this afternoon about another out-of-date policy of the Cold War that I believe should be ended; that is, the trade embargo on Cuba.

I have spoken about this many times in the past. Along with Senator Pell, Senator Dodd, and many others, I argued against the Helms-Burton Act in 1996.

For the past 50 years, our country's policy toward Cuba has been essentially stagnant. The core element of our foreign policy—which is the embargo—was authorized in a proclamation signed by President Kennedy on February 3, 1962; that is, 51 years ago. At that time, President Kennedy justified the embargo by citing the “. . . subversive offensive of Sino-Soviet Communism with which the Government of Cuba is publicly aligned. . . .”

He also stated his willingness to “. . . take all necessary actions to promote national and hemispheric security by isolating the present Government of Cuba and thereby reducing the threat posed by its alignment with the communist powers.”

It is an understatement to say President Kennedy's rationale is from a different era. The Cold War is over. The “subversive offensive of Sino-Soviet Communism” has been turned back. What remains of the Communist powers he was referring to are now our major trading partners. We have now extended permanent normal trade relations to Russia, which was, of course, the principal Communist power to which President Kennedy was referring, and neither Cuba nor those Communist powers pose a threat to national or hemispheric security today.

The world has changed. It is long past time that we change our policy toward Cuba. The embargo should have been lifted decades ago. It does not serve our national interest. It does not make our country safer. It does no good for the people of Cuba whom we claim to want to help. They would have better jobs and better lives if they could do business with the United States, which is the biggest economy in the world. The embargo does not help their families in the United States. Until recently, their families in the United States were severely restricted in how often they could visit and how much money they could send back to their relatives. It is ironic that for so long our policy for opposing the repression of freedoms in Cuba has included restricting the freedom of Americans to travel to see their families in that country.

As I have said before, I deplore the repression of the Castro brothers' government. The United States should support the efforts of the Cuban people to fight for their basic rights, and they need our help. Earlier this year, Amnesty International issued a damning assessment that said:

The Cuban government wages a permanent campaign of harassment and short-term detentions of political opponents to stop them from demanding respect for civil and political rights. The Cuban government should release all political prisoners.

The Cuban Government should also release Alan Gross, the American who has been jailed for more than 3 years now for distributing telephones in Cuba. As I understand it, he is in poor health and a humanitarian parole is more than justified.

When we hear about the Cuban Government's policies toward people—the repression of their basic freedoms, the persecution of political dissidents—it is understandable to want to punish the government and to weaken it so it collapses. We have to ask ourselves if our goal is to punish the Cuban Government or, instead, to help the Cuban people. Our goal should be to help the Cuban people.

Further, we have to ask ourselves whether continuing the embargo will accomplish that goal. In my view, the answer is clearly no.

It defies belief and 50 years of historical evidence to think that continuing the embargo will result in the toppling of the Castro regime. That regime has survived 50 years of sanctions. Fidel Castro is 84 years old. Raul Castro is 81 years old. It is much more likely that old age and ill health will end their rule rather than the embargo ending their rule; nor will continuing the embargo into a sixth decade—which is what we are now in danger of doing—result in the release of Alan Gross or political prisoners in Cuba or a sudden shift to democracy.

A better approach is to build relationships between the people and businesses in the United States and the people and businesses in Cuba. Interaction is a more powerful driver of change than isolation. We should allow more travel, we should allow more communication, and we should allow more commerce.

I wish to be clear that ending the embargo would not mean we agree with the Cuban Government's policies, nor does it mean we must stop advocating for basic freedoms and democracy in that nation. We need to be clear-eyed about the human rights abuses in Cuba. But the United States, as the only remaining superpower in the world, should be able to balance these goals. It is the approach we have taken with China. It is the approach we are taking with our vote today with Russia.

I wish to point out that as in Cuba, there are significant concerns about human rights and democracy in Russia. In fact, the legislation we voted on to expand our economic ties with Russia includes sanctions targeted at people who commit human rights violations. Those provisions are, of course, called the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law and Accountability Act. They were authored by Senators CARDIN, KYL, MCCAIN, and others. We could take a

similar approach with Cuba, expanding economic ties while continuing to put pressure on those responsible for repressing basic rights and basic freedoms.

Ultimately, because of the web of sanctions legislation that has been enacted over the years, only Congress has the authority to fully lift the embargo. But until Congress is willing to end that embargo, I hope the President will act.

The President has substantial authority to loosen the restrictions on travel and commerce. President Obama has already taken important steps, for example, by removing restrictions on family travel and authorizing licenses for the sale of communications equipment. I urge the President to make maximum use of the authorities he does have to relax sanctions. It should have been done long ago. I hope it can be done soon.

I yield the floor and 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. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRIBUTES TO DEPARTING SENATORS

JIM WEBB

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I wish to say a few words about my friend and colleague Senator JIM WEBB. He has made a decision not to run for reelection which, for me, is very sad, but it is truly not a good deal for the State of Virginia or our country. JIM WEBB has served one term in the Senate. He accomplished more in that one term than most do in a lifetime. I repeat, I am very sorry to see him leave.

JIM is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, a highly decorated Marine. He was an infantry officer and served with distinction in Vietnam, and that is an understatement. He did serve with distinction. He earned a Navy Cross, which is the second highest decoration in the Navy and Marine Corps. He got that for heroism in Vietnam. He was awarded a Silver Star, two Bronze Stars, two Purple Hearts.

He, of course, wanted to be in the military all of his life, but when he returned from Vietnam he could not do it anymore. His injuries from the war prevented him from doing that. He attended Georgetown Law School where he graduated with distinction, served 4 years with President Reagan as Assistant Secretary of Defense and Secretary of the Navy. He was the first Naval Academy graduate to serve as the civilian head of the Navy. He is also an author, having written six books, a filmmaker, screen writer. He even won an Emmy.

Long after JIM WEBB left the Marine Corps, and despite his many civilian

accomplishments, he remains a marine at heart. He is a marine through and through. He learned the tradition of service at home, although home changed often with his father's duty station. Jim's father was an officer in the U.S. Air Force and a pilot during World War II.

JIM's son, Jimmy Webb, a marine who served in Iraq, continued that tradition of service. Although JIM WEBB was a vocal opponent of the Iraq war, he was incredibly proud of his son's service as a soldier in battle-torn Iraq. Every day of his 2006 campaign, JIM WEBB wore his son's combat boots. It was a tribute not only to Jimmy, his boy, but to all people who have been sent into harm's way, he said.

I met JIM WEBB in my office not far from here as a result of Senator Bob Kerrey asking me if I would spend some time with him. I was happy to do so. I will never forget that meeting, just the three of us in the room. Those of us who worked with Bob Kerrey know he is and was such a vibrant person. He was almost mischievous, I guess you could put it. You could just tell he had a little touch of differentness.

When he brought JIM in to visit with me I learned very quickly they were both warriors—Bob Kerrey, a Navy Seal, recipient of the Medal of Honor, and JIM WEBB, as we said, Navy Cross, a Silver Star, two Bronze Stars, both veterans of the Vietnam war.

As we sat talking, it was obvious they were both fighters, warriors. JIM certainly proved that in his 2006 campaign. The reason Bob wanted me to visit with him is because JIM WEBB had decided he wanted to run for the Senate. What did I think of it?

I probably told JIM what a lot of people told him: You want to run for the Senate? The election is right upon us.

He said, I want to do that.

Not many believed he had any chance of winning. He believed he could, Bob Kerrey believed he could, but he ran because he wanted to and, boy, did he run hard.

For me, though, it did not settle in my mind until the night before the election. There was an event in Alexandria, VA. It was a cold November night. I stood with JIM on that stage. I realized then that he could win. People were lined up for blocks. "Lined up" was the wrong word—people covered blocks. Every open space as far as you could see was filled with people.

President Clinton was there. I was there. They didn't come to see me, of course. They came to see not President Clinton, they came to see JIM WEBB because he was doing the impossible. He had captivated the voters. He was unafraid. He spoke his mind. And what a smart man.

I marvel at the intelligence of JIM WEBB, his ability to learn and to express his ideas. As I said, he captivated the voters. That is really why he won the race he should not have been able to win.

Once he was elected, he was a marvel to watch. He believed he could change the world. He did change several corners of the world. Let me give one example. He was a new Senator and he came to me and said, I have an idea. JIM WEBB is not a person who just focuses on an idea and walks away from it. When JIM WEBB came to see me, he had the legislation he had drafted. It was not sent to some bill drafter to have him look it over, he drafted the legislation himself. What did he want to do? He wanted to introduce a post-9/11 GI Bill of Rights. What he wanted to do was expand educational benefits for military families and he brought our commitment to our veterans to the standard enjoyed by World War II veterans. He was just a freshman Senator.

After spending about an hour with him with facts and figures and the actual legislation, I said sign me up. I will do whatever I can to help you with it.

A brandnew Senator passed this major piece of legislation. He built a coalition of veterans and Democratic and Republican Senators to fight for this legislation. Since this legislation became law in 2008, more than 750,000 veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and their families have used the program to access the education they deserve.

JIM, who speaks Vietnamese, has also helped shape our country's foreign policy in other places. He played a key role in Burma where he secured the rights of democracy activists such as Aung San Suu Kyi, who came and visited us a month or so ago.

JIM WEBB is a unique individual in so many different ways. He has visited many of the places where the battles were fought in World War II. He went to those islands and spent time walking to see what the veterans had gone through in a war prior to the one in which he was involved. He actually did that. It was physically hard, but he wanted to do that and he did it on his own.

Robert Kennedy said:

Few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation.

JIM WEBB should be proud of his part—it was not a small part—in writing the history of his generation. He did it in the battlefields in Vietnam. He did it in the Pentagon. He did it here in the Senate.

I do not know what is ahead for JIM WEBB, but we have not heard the last of him. He has a wonderful, beautiful wife and wonderful children. He left his mark on the Senate and he will never be forgotten, even though he served here one term. I am really sorry his Senate career was not longer, but I am gratified it was so productive.

I congratulate JIM WEBB and express on this RECORD how much I admire him and what a strength he has been to me. He was a strength to me on the health

care bill. He has given me wonderful information on immigration—which I have spent a lot of time on. I have read some of his books. I have not read them all but I read a couple of them. He is somebody I will miss very much and I will always consider JIM WEBB somebody who made me a better person.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HAGAN. 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

Mrs. HAGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to 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.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO SHERIFF DANNY HICKMAN

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Boone County Sheriff Danny Hickman for his commitment to safety and law enforcement during 14 years at the helm of the sheriff's department.

Sheriff Hickman made a career of helping others, serving in the fire department, medical, and law enforcement fields, as well as the Boone County Quorum Court before being elected sheriff in 1998.

His dedication to safety and law enforcement has been instrumental in the improvements within the department and the services available to the citizens of Boone County. Sheriff Hickman made 21st century improvements to office computers, patrol cars, and provided resources for additional training for officers and staff.

In addition, he continuously strived for opportunities to learn the newest methods available to law enforcement officers in programs offered by the University of Arkansas division of Criminal Justice Institute and to help meet the needs of rural communities during the Rural Executive Management Institute.

His efforts helped bring nearly \$½ million in Federal grants for school resource officers, a domestic violence officer, radio and camera equipment for area schools, and law enforcement services in Boone County. Sheriff Hickman made safety improvements a priority.

He has a true passion to making sure the people of Arkansas. Sheriff Hickman is the past president of the Arkansas Sheriff's Association and currently