fare carriers have increased competition, and have enabled more people to fly than ever before. Air traffic has grown as a result, and all predictions are that it will continue to grow steadily over the next several years.

In spite of the success of deregulation, many believe that competition can be improved. The competition provisions in the Air Transportation Improvement Act would ease some of the federally-imposed barriers that remain in the deregulated environment. These barriers include the slot controls at four major airports and the perimeter rule at Reagan National Airport.

Although this legislation is a positive step forward for our national aviation system, one of my main priorities, which is not included in the Air Transportation Improvement Act, will be to push for an increase in the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) cap. We must address the widening infrastructure gap that threatens to hamstring our national aviation system. The independent National Civil Aviation Review Commission and the GAO also estimate that there is a backlog in airport improvements of approximately $3 billion per year. To ensure that our infrastructure deficit can be met, we must look for innovative solutions such as a PFC increase which allow local control and responsibly for improving our national aviation system.

I look forward to working with Senators MCCAIN, HOLLINGS, and ROCKEFELLER to ensure that our common goals of providing a safe and secure aviation system for both commercial airlines and the general aviation community as well as providing adequate resources for the FAA to carry out this task are met.●

RECOGNITION OF BERNICE BARLOW

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable person from Saginaw, Michigan, Mrs. Bernice Barlow. Mrs. Barlow is leaving her position as president of the Saginaw branch of the NAACP after thirty years.

As president of the Saginaw NAACP, Bernice Barlow has been a powerful advocate for equality and civil rights. Although her tireless efforts on behalf of the NAACP are admirable in their own right, Mrs. Barlow has not confined her community service to the NAACP. She has also served with distinction in leadership roles with organizations like the Saginaw Education Association, the Tri-County Fair Housing Association and the Saginaw County Mental Health Board.

Despite her retirement from the presidency of the Saginaw NAACP, Bernice Barlow will continue her service to the people of Saginaw. Her husband, Charles, and her four children will surely be pleased to have more of her time, but I have no doubt that they will support her continuing efforts to ensure that equality and justice are recognized as the birthrights of every citizen.

Mr. President, I am confident that my colleagues will join me in congratulating Bernice Barlow as she steps down from her position as president of the Saginaw NAACP, and in thanking her for her longstanding commitment to the people of the city of Saginaw.●

FOREIGN TRAVEL OF SENATOR ARLEN SPECTER

● Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, during the winter recess, I had the opportunity to travel from Dec. 12 through Dec. 31, 1998, to 13 countries in Europe, the Mideast and the Gulf. I flew over with President Clinton on Air Force One, spent the first several days in Israel essentially working with the President's schedule, and then pursued my own agenda when he returned to Washington. I believe it is worthwhile to share with my colleagues some of my impressions from that trip, which I am placing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Jan. 19, 1999, the first day for statements in the 106th Congress.

ISRAEL

From December 12 through December 15, I traveled with President Clinton to the Middle East to encourage the advancement of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in the wake of the accords reached in October at Wye Plantation. Although somewhat overshadowed by the pending impeachment process, the President's trip was useful, I believe, in applying pressure to both sides to abide by their commitments toward further progress.

SYRIA

When President Clinton returned to Washington, I proceeded to Damascus, Syria, where I met with Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, to examine the possibility of progress on the Israeli-Syrian track of the Mideast peace process. While I believe that progress between Israel and the Palestinians could be made with the resumption of a dialogue between Israel and Syria, the pending Israeli elections have rendered the prospect for that dialogue unlikely in the short run.

The big news while I talked with President Assad was the increasing tension between the United States and Iraq over the U.N. inspection of Iraq's weapons program. Because Syria shares a long border and cultural heritage—though certainly no great friendship—with Iraq, even the threat of military conflict between the U.S. and Baghdad produces immediate and tangible emotions among many Syrians.

That afternoon in December, the situation in Iraq seemed grave: the U.N. team had evacuated the country, and chief inspector Richard Butler was preparing to address the U.N. Security Council in an emergency session. I did not know that a strike was imminent, but President Assad and I speculated during our meeting on news reports concerning what the immediate future might hold.

Past midnight in Damascus, CNN carried live footage of anti-aircraft fire and air-raid sirens in Baghdad, only a few hundred miles away. The President's remarks from the Oval Office followed shortly thereafter, and, after a short night's rest, I was asked to comment on the bombing to an expectant Syrian press corps.

I told the press the same thing that I told President Assad in the previous day's meeting: I had written the President on November 12 urging him not to order the use of U.S. force against Iraq without first obtaining Congressional authorization as required by the United States Constitution. I believe that a missile strike is an act of war, and only the Congress of the United States under our Constitution has the authority to declare war.

Had the President taken the matter to the Congress, as President Bush did in 1991, I would have supported it. I believe that Saddam Hussein is a menace to the region and to the world. I believe it is true that he is developing weapons of mass destruction, and that he has demonstrated a willingness to employ chemical weapons for the most destructive and terrible purposes. Clearly, some forceful international action has to be taken.

I said I did not believe the President acted because of the pending impeachment vote. I indicated that, in my opinion, the President acted because he had put Saddam Hussein on notice in the past, and Ramadan was coming, as the President explained the previous evening. I said that I believe the House of Representatives was right in delaying the vote for a couple of days while we commenced a military strike on Iraq.

Constitutional requirements aside, there is a practical benefit to seeking Congressional approval for acts of war. When a President has the backing of Congress confirmed by way of a recorded vote, his hand is immediately strengthened in the eyes of the world. Absent that imprimatur of support, America's enemies or would-be enemies are left to poke and carp at the propriety and the purpose of the military action. And the attendant Congressional debate helps to sharpen the aims and follow-on goals of any action. Winning Congress' approval requires a President to spell out exactly what he hopes to accomplish through military force, and it forces him to keep those goals within the bounds of reality.

A recorded vote on military authorization is healthy for the Congress, as well. It puts Senators and Congressmen on the spot, up-or-down, on a matter of pivotal importance in national policy: deciding whether the goals of a military action justify the price in the blood and sweat of our troops. It is simply too easy for Congressional critics to bob and weave around taking a position on a given military action. If a particular campaign takes a difficult

turn, critics emerge from the woodwork. If, on the other hand, our troops achieve dramatic, unforseen successes, prior Congressional critics of the action take to the floor in lavish praise.

Insisting on proper Congressional debate and authorization on future military acts would end this charade, while fulfilling a fundamental tenet of our Constitution: ''The Congress . . . shall have power to declare war . . .''

EGYPT

Following the press conference, I departed Syria for Cairo, Egypt, to meet with President Hosni Mubarak. President Mubarak and I have met numerous times since his ascent to power following the assassination of President Anwar Sadat in 1981. Needless to say, our discussion this time centered around the U.S. military strike on Iraq. I made the same points about Congressional authorization for the use of force, and it was clear from the initial Egyptian reaction to the strike that our motives would have been clarified, and our hand strengthened, had the President sought and received the backing of Congress before attacking. Following my hour-long discussion with President Mubarak, I addressed the Egyptian press corps on the same points at the Presidential palace.

MACEDONIA

I then departed Egypt for Skopje, Macedonia. Upon arrival, I met with Ambassador Christopher R. Hill to discuss the situation in Kosovo and other issues affecting Bosnian regional stability.

Skopje is a beautiful, small city surrounded on all sides by mountains. The city was leveled almost completely by a post-WWII earthquake, as a result of which very little of the original Macedonian architecture remains. In place of the earlier buildings stand poured-concrete, Soviet-style structures that fail to reflect the rich heritage of the Macedonian people.

Formerly a sub-entity of Yugoslavia, Macedonia won its independence in the breakup of the former Soviet-bloc country that followed the end of the cold war. Macedonians are clearly hardworking people, and it is probably no surprise that the tiny republic's economy reportedly is doing better than that of most other Yugoslavian republics save Slovenia.

Ambassador Hill and I met that afternoon with the country's newly-installed 33-year-old Prime Minister, Ljubco Giorgievski. The youthful Mr. Giorgievski is obviously proud of the emergence of Macedonia as a stable entity in a clearly unstable region. Mindful of the threat that Serbia has posed to Bosnia and Kosovo, he is particularly anxious for his country to develop friendly, close alliances with NATO, the European Community, and the United States.

That evening, I met with Ambassador William Walker, the U.N. head of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission. Ambassador Walker described in detail the instability of the region, and his unease about the lack of a protective detail or even airlift assets for his U.N. mission there. He described the situation in Kosovo as very different from Bosnia: Kosovo is a small-scale guerilla war, with no front lines, and with both Serbs and Albanians fighting for public opinion in the region. Ambassador Walker said his chief frustration is the absence of a political settlement for the U.N. to implement in Kosovo, such as the one that was forged in Bosnia. Without such an agreement, he said, providing real stability to the region will remain extremely problematic, as the U.N. will not be able to move forward on training local authorities and local police forces to provide security to the region.

NETHERLANDS

The next morning, I proceeded to the Netherlands, where I held a working lunch with Ambassador Cynthia P. Schneider and three members of the Dutch Parliament who served as experts in their different parties on Middle East issues. A consensus emerged that the international community needs to work to replace Saddam Hussein as the leader of Iraq, but no one could point to a realistic way for the international community to get that done.

We also discussed the benefits to the United States' opening up a dialogue with Iran in the future. Interestingly, one of the Members of Parliament present, Geert Wilders, had traveled to Iran, and expressed frustration that the absence of a real dialogue between the United States and Iran meant that Russia is having a disproportionate influence on the government, especially by way of providing technological expertise for the development of weapons of mass destruction. That said, Mr. Wilders expressed the clear difficulty in developing a productive dialogue with a government that hold such irresponsible positions on regional and international security.

I then proceeded to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, where I met with Chief Prosecutor Louise Arbour and President Judge Gabrielle McDonald. In contrast to my previous visits to the tribunal, Justice Arbour expressed a reasonable degree of satisfaction with the Tribunal's U.N. funding, up by $23 million from last year's level of $70 million. Not surprisingly, Justice Arbour views this manifold increase as a real endorsement of the Tribunal's work in bringing justice to the victims of atrocities in Bosnia. In particular, she described the success of the prosecutors' exhumation of mass grave sites in Bosnia as part of their search for evidence to support present trials and further indictments. Justice Arbour expressed her aim of indicting and prosecuting a handful of ''top'' officials in the Bosnian conflict through the prosecution of lower-level criminals at present.

Judge Gabrielle McDonald, a former U.S. District Court Judge in Houston, indicated a similar satisfaction with the work of the tribunal, but, for her part, feels somewhat understaffed in her chambers, particularly as the prosecutors and bring more cases to trial. Also, Judge McDonald, as the Tribunal's Chief Judge, would like to publicize the court's work as a way both of letting victims know justice is being served, and of assuring those under indictment that they will receive a truly fair trial in The Hague, should they surrender themselves to the court.

As I left the Tribunal, the U.S. Embassy in The Hague was overrun by anti-war activists protesting the U.S. military strike against Iraq.

ENGLAND

During a stopover in London, I met with the country team headed by Deputy Chief of Mission Robert Bradtke, to discuss further fallout from the bombing. The evening of my arrival, the House of Representatives voted out two Articles of Impeachment on President Clinton. The next evening, I appeared on a live broadcast of CBS's Face the Nation from the network's London studio. The show came the day after the House voted to impeach President Clinton, and I discussed procedures and context for the impending Senate trial.

BELGIUM/NORTH ATLANTIC ASSEMBLY

Operation Desert Fox, the US and British missile strikes on Iraq which ran four days during my travels, spurred anti-American demonstrations, attacks on US embassies and flag-burnings throughout Europe and the Mideast, including many of the nations to which I traveled. We had to switch hotels in Brussels upon arrival on Sunday, Dec. 20, because the American-owned Sheraton hotel where we had planned to stay was the site of a demonstration by some 200 Arabs, who seized and burned the hotel's American flag, and a bomb threat that forced the evacuation of the entire hotel. There had also been a demonstration during the day at the hotel where we did stay, but there was no more trouble that night.

Upon arrival Sunday evening Dec. 20 in Brussels, I met with U.S. Ambassador to NATO Alexander Vershbow for an informal briefing. On Monday morning at NATO headquarters, I met formally with the ambassador and 11 members of the U.S. team. We discussed ways of activating NATO against Iraq, and I expressed my concern that the recent bombings of Iraq were a strictly US-British operation, with no help from any of our other allies. Our team suggested that it takes too long to line up other nations and gives too much warning to Saddam. I rejected that proposition, given that we had signaled our intentions against Iraq after our near-strike in November.

We also discussed the Russian threat to Western Europe, stemming from Russian instability, and our efforts in Bosnia and Kosovo. As for NATO and United Nations missions, I commented that many Americans abhor the idea of

putting US troops under a foreign commander. I told our team about the protests I hear on the subject regularly at my open-house town meetings throughout Pennsylvania. Some of our team argued that, ultimately, all NATO troops are under an American supreme commander, even if they happen to also be under a European divisional commander.

I met next with the German Ambassador to NATO, Joachim Bitterlich, who had served previously as former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's national security adviser. Ambassador Bitterlich began by assuring me that the US-British strike against Iraq was the right thing to do. I took up the questions of Iraq, Iran and the Middle East with Ambassador Bitterlich, and we agreed that expanded dialog should be part of any strategy. Like many other policy setters, Ambassador Bitterlich said he struggling to find any leverage over Saddam Hussein.

I met next with Gen. Klaus Nauman, Chairman of the NATO Military Committee. Gen. Nauman likened Saddam Hussein and his oppressive regime to the Nazis, under whom Gen. Nauman had spent his early childhood. Such a repressive terrorist regime makes it very difficult to foster opposition forces from within, the General warned. As for Russia, Gen. Nauman agreed that western nations would be well advised to spend money to destroy Russia's nuclear and chemical weapons stockpile, as the United States and Germany have. But he cautioned that we must make sure the money goes for the purpose intended, and is not diverted, as past funds have been.

GREECE

We left Brussels early Monday morning and traveled most of the day, arriving in Athens late in the afternoon. I met with Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns. We discussed a variety of subjects, ranging from Greek-Turkish tension to the situations in Crete and Cyprus to local reaction to the Iraq bombings.

BAHRAIN

We left Athens early Tuesday morning, Dec. 22, and traveled to Bahrain. At a refueling stop at the Cairo airport, I met with two members of our country team to discuss recent intelligence about anti-American attacks in the region stemming from Operation Desert Fox. They briefed me on a mob attack on the U.S. ambassador's residence in Damascus, in which the residence was destroyed and our ambassador's wife was holed up in a steel-walled safe haven closet until Marines arrived to rescue her. Arriving late in the afternoon in Manama, Bahrain, I was met at the airport by Ambassador Johnny Young and Vice Admiral Charles ''William'' Moore and members of their teams. Admiral Moore, Commander of the Fifth Fleet, was in charge of much of the U.S. effort in Operation Desert Fox.

At the US Embassy, Admiral Moore and several of his senior officers briefed me on details of Operation Desert Fox. The operation, as Admiral Moore summarized it, was a success in that our forces executed their objectives with zero allied casualties.

I met next with 13 area chiefs of UNSCOM, the United Nations program to check Iraq's weapons of mass destruction through inspections and destruction of materiel. The UNSCOM chiefs, mostly in their 30s, came primarily from the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Britain. They looked shell-shocked, and as though they had not slept in weeks. As I told them at the outset, the world owes them a debt of gratitude for the job they have done and for the risks they have taken.

UNSCOM's numbers have dwindled from a high of 186 inspectors to 112. Forty-seven of the inspectors had moved their base to Bahrain after evacuating from Iraq hours before the bombing. We discussed their assessments of Iraq's biological, chemical and nuclear weapons programs, the various delivery systems Iraq was developing or had built, and the difficulties in conducting inspections and in tracking weapons components and chemical precursors. They told me, for example, that they had found biological agents in far greater quantities than could be justified by legitimate uses. The UNSCOM chiefs all said they were ''keen'' to return to Iraq and continue their work, though that prospect remains in doubt.

OMAN

Early Wednesday morning, Dec. 23, we flew to Oman. Upon arrival in the capital city of Muscat, we drove for a meeting with Sheik Abdullah bin Ali Al-Qatabi, President of the Majlis As-Shura, or elected lower house of the national council. For the first 40 minutes, the Sheikh deflected my questions about threats to the region and the world by Iraq and Iran, reducing the meeting to small talk and an exchange of views on civics and bicameral legislatures. Then, when we took photographs and stood to leave, the Sheik could contain himself no longer and told me what was really on his mind, for nearly an hour as we stood at the center of his office.

The Sheik said Iraq did not pose the grave threat I suggested, arguing that Saddam Hussein had not used weapons of mass destruction during the Persian Gulf War and probably would not again. Further, he argued, our operations would not eliminate Saddam Hussein, but would only hurt the Iraqi people, who depend on the infrastructure we destroy, and inflame passions throughout the region against the United States.

The Sheik was concerned that we had embarrassed the Sultan and the government of Oman through publicity about the use of Omani bases by U.S. aircraft during Operation Desert Fox. He used the word ''embarrassment'' four times, noting that such embarrassment made it more difficult for Omani leaders to pursue their genuine desires to continue warm relations with the United States. Oman was not embarrassed about the use of its bases for allied planes during Operation Desert Storm in 1991 because of Iraq's aggression against Kuwait, he said.

The Sheikh told me that he was being unusually frank out of friendship, and I assured him I appreciated his candor. I addressed his concerns, telling him that collateral damage to civilians is inevitable in any military strike, and that we minimized civilian casualties during Operation Desert Fox and very much regretted any losses.

I met next with U.S. Ambassador Frances Cook and members of her team. Ambassador Cook warned that anti-American opinion had been growing in Oman. Two demonstrations were held at the university, she noted; the only two in the school's 10-year history. From this visit and previous contacts, I believe Ambassador Cook has done an outstanding job.

I then met with Oman's Minister of Information, Abdulaziz Al-Rawwas, for what would prove another long and direct conversation. Minister Al-Rawwas also did not consider Iraq or Iran threats to the region, and also criticized our military efforts against Iraq as ineffective. He pressed me to consider an overture to Iran to warm US relations with that nation, such as dropping embargoes or allowing a planned Caspian oil pipeline to pass through Iran on a southern route to the Persian Gulf, rather than through a western route through southern Europe to the Black Sea, which the U.S. currently favors. I assured him I would study the matter.

Our party arrived at the Muscat airport shortly after 6 am the next morning, Thursday, to fly to Islamabad for a scheduled meeting with Pakistan's Prime Minister and for other meetings in Pakistan and India. I had wanted to discuss the nuclear stand-off in the region, and disarmament measures. But fog and smoke over most of the subcontinent made air travel impossible, for us and for all other commercial and official traffic into and out of the subcontinent. We had no better luck on Friday morning. We then tried to adjust our schedule, but were unable to get necessary clearances and make flight and meeting arrangements on Friday, Dec. 25, which was both Christmas Day and the first Friday of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. We wound up staying in Oman until Saturday morning, Dec. 26, at which point we departed for Amman, Jordan.

JORDAN

Days before I arrived in Amman, Jordanian Parliamentarians, in a highly unusual move, surprised the Monarchy by convening a conference of Arab Parliamentarians on six days notice, to discuss the US-British missile strikes on Iraq. Parliamentarians from 15 of the 16 countries in the Arab League dispatched representatives to Amman.

Only Kuwait declined to attend. President Assad reportedly ordered the Syrian Speaker to attend personally.

After arriving in Amman, I met with Jordan's Foreign Minister, Abdul Illah Al Khatib, for an hour. Minister Khatib, whom I had met several times over the years both in Washington and Jordan, lamented the failure so far to implement the Wye River peace accord between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Both sides, we agreed, were torn by factionalism. On the Israeli side, Prime Minister Netanyahu was mired in struggles with hard-liners and fighting to keep his job, while on the Palestinian side, Abu Mazen, the second-ranking official, had his house stoned for his efforts to effect the peace accord, leaving him reportedly so shaken that he wanted nothing more to do with the peace process. In the face of such factionalism, Al Khatib said, the parties and the process needed leadership from the United States.

Jordan's other pressing foreign policy problem, Al Khatib said, was Iraq. He noted that the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, which sparked the Persian Gulf War, sent 400,000 Kuwaiti refugees to Jordan, swelling Jordan's population by 10 percent and buffeting Jordan's economy as it tries to house and absorb the new residents. The foreign minister said we should have a permanent monitoring system for Iraq's weapons efforts. In the evening, we met with Crown Prince El Hassan bin Talal, heir to the throne and brother of King Hussein, who was at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota undergoing cancer therapy, and several of his ministers. The Crown Prince had been briefed on my meeting with the Foreign Minister, and we proceeded directly to discussing policy.

The next morning, Sunday, Dec. 27, I met with our embassy team for a briefing. Based on what they told me, I grew even more concerned that we had so badly misread regional public opinion in launching our strikes against Iraq.

Before leaving Washington, I had raised that specific question with an Administration Cabinet officer. He had replied the administration had no day-after plan; but that was not a reason not to launch the strikes. Disagreeing sharply, I said it was.

Our policy makers apparently based their assurances to the American public of Arab support on regional leaders who, eager for US aid, told them what they thought the Americans wanted to hear. No longer can the United States talk only to government officials to gauge their nation's reaction. Nor can we count on Arab national leaders to suppress public reaction against our ill-planned acts.

In Amman, our experts told me that despite general ennui with Saddam Hussein, Jordanian public opinion about our missile strikes was very strongly pro-Saddam, a feeling exacerbated by the US failure to articulate a post-strike plan. After my discussion with our embassy team, I met Sunday morning with Jordanian Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, who expressed the same criticisms of our recent strikes against Iraq. ''We don't know what the military strike did,'' the Prime Minister said. ''It seems he is better off.'' Our timing was poor, he said, just before the Islamic holy month of Ramadan and following what he perceived as Israel putting the Wye River accord ''in the deep freeze.''

As for Iraqi opposition to Saddam, the Prime Minister said, it is there, but it is fictionalized and lacks any acceptable leader. ''It is a complicated matter, and every military strike makes it more complicated,'' he said.

When the Jordanian Prime Minister apologized for the Amman Parliamentarians' conference, I surprised him by expressing my view that it was a healthy sign to see Jordan's Parliamentarians expressing an independent view from the Jordanian government, even if it conflicted with US policy.

''We have to do a much better job in the United States of taking into account what the public reaction will be,'' I conceded.

When I asked the Prime Minister to explain the Jordanian people's support for Iraq and Saddam, he said, ''The people here do support Saddam. Jordanians do not believe in dictatorship. They are aware of the fact that this is a brutal regime. But this does not negate the fact that the Iraqis are our brothers.''

IZMIR, TURKEY

From Amman, we flew to Izmir, Turkey, a city of 4 million that serves as headquarters for a NATO charged with ensuring the security and territory of NATO's southern and eastern flank. I spent much of the day Sunday with Maj. Gen. Reginal Clemmons, Commanding General of the U.S. Army Element of the Allied Land Forces-Southeastern Europe, members of Gen. Clemmons's staff, and U.S. Air Force officers from the 425th Air Base Squadron, based in downtown Izmir.

Over the course of several hours, we discussed Greek-Turkish tension, recently inflamed by plans to bring Russian-made S–300 missiles to the Greek island of Crete, and still hot over joint control of Cyprus; plans to create a Kurdish state in northern Iraq; a potential Caspian oil pipeline through Turkey; and realities of working with foreign military officers. Gen. Clemmons serves as deputy commander of the Izmir-based NATO post, under a four-star Turkish general.

GEORGIA

Before dawn Tuesday morning, we took off for Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, one of the 15 former Soviet Republics. Rugged, mountainous and historically worn-torn, Georgia is famous as the home of former Soviet leader Joseph Stalin. Georgia endured several years of civil war recently, from the Soviet breakup until 1995. President Eduard Shevardnadze, the former Soviet Foreign Minister, survived two assassination attempts, and has led the effort to ally Georgia with the West and to foster democracy and a market economy. Georgia has been looking primarily to the United States for help.

I met first with U.S. Ambassador Kenneth Yalowitz and his team at the embassy for a full briefing on the nation of 5 million. We discussed Georgia's struggle toward democracy and a market economy, frustrated by corruption, civil war, and failure to collect taxes; Georgia's struggle with Russia, which seeks to control its former republic and thwart its efforts toward independence; Georgia's reliance on U.S. aid, which was $85 million this year, compared to the nation's $100 million budget; and advantages and disadvantages of running the Caspian oil pipeline through Georgia to the Black Sea.

I then met for an hour with President Shevardnadze. The President looked more somber than he had when I last saw him in Washington, but he still seemed vigorous and intense at not quite 71. Mr. Shevardnadze is largely responsible for the progress Georgia has made toward democratization and a market economy since the Soviet Union crumbled in 1991, but he was the first to say much more work remains to be done. Nation building was put off until 1995, after Georgia's post-Soviet civil war ended, he noted.

Russian instability poses perhaps the greatest threat to the region, Shevardnadze said. He brushed off my concern that an expanded NATO would give Russian hard-liners an excuse to seize control, saying extremists did not have an adequate base from which to take over. But President Shevardnadze said he did have a major concern: ''The West failed to notice the Soviet Union's disintegration; the West was caught unaware,'' he said. ''Make sure the formation of a new Soviet Union does not catch you similarly unaware.''

In Russia, Shevardnadze warned, people of all political stripes support restoring the Soviet Union. He did not see a reunited Soviet Union as a benign force. ''Gorbachev had a different vision; a vision of a democratic Soviet Union,'' Shevardnadze said. ''But that was an illusion—or a delusion.'' If democracy were an option, he said, the former Soviet republics would opt for independence.

On the question of terrorism, Shevardnadze said the United States should pressure Russia to stop selling arms to rogue nations such as Iran, saying we should have leverage over Russia, considering the $18 billion we give them. Shevardnadze, not surprisingly, argued that the Caspian oil pipeline should run through Georgia and Turkey. The pipeline, by all accounts, offers a major strategic and economic plum for any nation through which it runs.

We met next with Georgia's Minister of State, the equivalent of the Prime Minister, Vazha Lordkipanidze. We discussed Georgia's economic reform efforts, including privatization, banking,

liberalization of prices, decentralization of management; and the smuggling, shoddy tax collection and Russian meddling that have frustrated these economic reforms. Lordkipanidze also did not believe NATO expansion would provoke and strengthen Russian hard-liners, saying extremists would find another pretext if NATO did not expand. The West must foster democracy in Russia and in other former Soviet republics, he urged.

Our final meeting in Tbilisi was with Parliamentary Chairman, or Speaker, Zhurab Zhvania, who had just turned 35, and a 31-year-old Parliamentarian who had studied law at Columbia University. The Parliamentarians' English was fluent, and they were both very impressive, and encouraging for their nation's long-term prospects. We covered the same sweep of issues that I had discussed with President Shevardnadze and with the Prime Minister, and they offered similar views. They spoke passionately about Georgia's Constitution, the only Eastern national charter patterned on the U.S. Constitution; and about the nation's judicial reform, including competitive exams monitored by California Bar examiners that cleared out nearly all the previous political appointees. We differed on the death penalty, which I believe is a deterrent to crime, but which Georgia has abolished, the Speaker said, as a matter of moral philosophy.

ANKARA, TURKEY

From Tbilisi we flew to Ankara, the capital of Turkey, arriving Tuesday evening, Dec. 29. We met the next morning with U.S. Ambassador Mark Parris, a former foreign affairs adviser to President Clinton, and his team for an hour briefing on the political landscape. Turkey's government is fractionalized, and the Turkish military commands the most popular support, which Parris considered a mixed blessing. The military is honest and conservative, cracking down on threats to the secular state, Parris said, but the military also cracks down on free speech that advocates proscribed positions. National elections and elections in Turkey's three major cities, Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, are all scheduled for April 1999.

I was particularly impressed that Turkey had succeeded in getting Syria to evict terrorist camps based near Syria's Turkish border that preyed on Turks. The Kurdish PKK movement, seeking a separate Kurdish state, has killed an estimated 30,000 Turks since the Soviet grip began to loosen around 1989. PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan was specifically evicted from Syria.

In my discussions with Parris and his team, we focused on the Caspian oil pipeline, beginning with the proposition that the Turks have come around to the American way of thinking: That the pipeline ought to run east-west to the Black Sea, through Turkey and Georgia, not south to the Persian Gulf through unstable and potentially hostile areas such as Iran. An east-west pipeline would tie central Asia to the West, and avoid giving Iran strategic leverage, the strategy holds.

I also remained impressed by Turkey's strong ties to Israel. The two nations conduct joint military exercises, trade and joint ventures on such items as insurance, leather goods and software. The collaboration began as a Turkish effort to win points with the United States, which was being pressed by Greek and other anti-Turkish lobbies. But the Turkish-Israeli collaboration soon warmed into a genuine symbiotic relationship apart from US politics, Parris said.

We met next with Ambassador Faruk Logoglu of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Logoglu had spent 13 years in the United States, attending college at Brandeis and graduate school at Princeton, teaching at Middlebury and serving at the United Nations before taking his post at the Turkish Foreign Ministry in 1971. Pressing for the east-west pipeline, Logoglu said, ''The pipeline is an umbilical cord tying countries to the West.''

My final meeting in Turkey was with President Suleyman Demirel. The President received us in a grand, wood-trimmed chamber in the Presidential palace, finished with red carpet and chandeliers. President Demirel spoke softly in perfect English.

I complimented the President on his warm relations with Israel, despite its risks of angering nations hostile to Israel. He replied that the Turkish-Israeli friendship had indeed angered some nations at Turkey. At an Islamic conference in Iran, the President said, he stood and said Turkey was a sovereign nation and could do whatever was necessary to pursue its interests. There was no response from representatives of the 55 nations present, he said.

As to Saddam Hussein, President Demirel said he had known him for about 24 years, but it was a ''puzzle'' as to how to deal with him. The United States should enlist allies in its efforts to influence Saddam, he urged.

I asked the President if he would accept an invitation to meet at the Oval Office with his Greek counterpart, with whom he does not talk, just as President Clinton had brought together Palestinian Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. I had no authority to call such a meeting, I noted, but stressed the power of the U.S. Presidency. The President replied that Cypriots, both Greek and Turkish, should come to an agreement first, but he did not discount the possibility of an Oval Office meeting.

NAPLES, ITALY

From Ankara we flew to Naples, where I met with Lt. Gen. Jack Nix, in charge of the Army NATO troops, while we refueled. We spent most of our half hour discussing Bosnia. Gen. Nix cautioned that we can only reduce our troops so far; that we must maintain a baseline to allow both mobility and the ability to rescue other troops.

From Naples we flew to London, where we arrived in the evening, stayed overnight at an airport hotel, and flew back to the United States the next day. Our visits were facilitated and generally made pleasant by the assistance and cooperation of U.S. embassies in the various countries.●

RECOGNITION OF DR. NICK HALL, JR.

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding community leader in the City of Saginaw, Michigan, Dr. Nick Hall, Jr. Dr. Hall is being recognized at the 17th Annual ''O Give Thanks'' Banquet, hosted by The New Valley Mass Choir.

Dr. Hall has served as Pastor of Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church since 1952, and has earned a reputation as one of Saginaw's most respected religious leaders. Throughout his 46 years of service at Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church, Dr. Hall has consistently demonstrated a deep devotion to the spiritual well being of his congregation and of the people of Saginaw.

Dr. Hall's leadership has not been confined to his congregation. He served as a County Commissioner from 1992 to 1996, and has been a prominent member of civic organizations like Habitat for Humanity, the AIDS Committee of Saginaw, the Clergy Coalition Against Crack Cocaine, and the Saginaw Substance Abuse Advisory Board. Through his ministry and his community involvement, Dr. Hall has touched the lives of thousands of people.

Mr. President, Dr. Nick Hall, Jr., has demonstrated a laudable commitment to making Saginaw a better place to live for all of its residents. It is truly fitting that he is being recognized for his achievements at this year's ''O Give Thanks'' Banquet. I know my colleagues will join me in commending Dr. Hall for his leadership and his dedication to the people of Saginaw, Michigan.●

RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

● Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, in accordance with the rules of the Senate, I ask that the rules of the Committee on Environment and Public Works, adopted by the committee January 20, 1999, be printed in the RECORD.

The rules follow:

RULES OF PROCEDURE

RULE 1. COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN GENERAL

(a) REGULAR MEETING DAYS: For purposes of complying with paragraph 3 of Senate Rule XXVI, the regular meeting day of the committee is the first and third Thursday of each month at 10:00 A.M. If there is no business before the committee, the regular meeting shall be omitted.

(b) ADDITIONAL MEETINGS: The chairman may call additional meetings, after consulting with the ranking minority member. Subcommittee chairmen may call meetings, with the concurrence of the chairman of the