

Finally, the law required that minor-age mothers having children while on welfare must live with a parent or guardian and stay in school, more commonly referred to as "Learnfare".

These reforms resulted in a 60 percent decrease in welfare rolls, and saved more than \$357 million in taxpayer funds in Virginia which were used for other priorities in education and law enforcement. Ultimately, I measure our success not by how many people are receiving welfare checks, but rather by how many people are leading independent, self-reliant lives.

Virginia's trailblazing welfare reform has been extremely successful in setting the stage for Federal welfare overhaul, significant declines in welfare roles nationwide, and increasing the number of former welfare recipients getting back to work. Virginia's waiver from Federal law has enabled much of the success in requiring able-bodied men and women to work for their benefits.

With the passage of the Federal welfare reform in the fall of 1996, Congress intended to give the States flexibility with the law. Flexibility through these waivers has allowed States the ability to develop innovative programs that best serve their citizens. Fifteen other States opted for waivers. Indeed, Virginia has far exceeded the goal of the Federal welfare legislation offering Virginians the best tools to provide for themselves and their families.

As of June 2003, Virginia's welfare waiver expired. It is imperative that the PRIDE Act, a continuation of welfare reform started in 1996, include waivers for States that have taken the initiative to make comprehensive welfare reforms. We need to ensure that States can continue to encourage independence through work, promote families and marriage and guarantee child-support enforcement.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment so that States can maintain these positive results and successful welfare reforms.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the extension of the temporary extended unemployment compensation program, which expires today. I support this effort because, in my view, we still face an extremely serious problem of unemployment in the United States, specifically as it relates to the number of workers who have exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits and are still unable to find work.

The Democrats have tried to extend this program through unanimous consent at least a dozen times this winter and the effort has been rejected by Republican leadership every time. We tried in February of this year. We tried in January of this year. And we tried a number of times in November 2003. Each time the other side of the aisle said the program was no longer needed. Even worse, they said that extension of the program would only give incentives

to workers to stay home instead of look for work. This is a very different view of American workers than I have.

According to the latest data from the Department of Labor, between December and February there will be at least 781,000 workers that will have exhausted their regular State benefits and will go without additional Federal unemployment assistance. Based on extrapolations from that analysis, the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities argues that with each week that goes by, another 80,000 workers will be added to this list. In no other comparable data on record has there been this many "exhaustees."

In my State of New Mexico, it is estimated that 4,300 workers have exhausted their benefits from December 2003 through March 2004. Through September 2004, it is estimated that 7,200 workers will have exhausted their benefits. In a State where the most recent unemployment rate is 5.7 percent and jobs are very difficult to come by, this is hardly an encouraging figure.

The Bush administration has argued that extension of the TEUC program is not necessary because the unemployment rate is low and the economy is growing. They suggested again and again that we are on the verge of an economic recovery and jobs are being created. I respectfully disagree.

In 2001, the Bush administration claimed that their tax cuts would create at least 800,000 jobs by 2002. That did not happen. In 2002, the Bush administration claimed that 3 million jobs would be created in 2003. That did not happen. In February, the Bush administration claimed in their economic report that 2.6 million jobs will be created in 2004, but everyone in the administration quickly backed away from that number. No one truly believes that this will happen.

Given the lack of coherent or comprehensive policy proposals by the administration, I say it is time we in Congress act to address job creation and help the victims of their failed policies. Extending the temporary emergency unemployment compensation program is, in my view, the least we can do for Americans that have been attempting to find work but cannot do so. As a practical matter, this means workers can continue to get unemployment insurance benefits while they continue to search for work.

So I want to add my voice to the others today and say that we must pass this legislation before it expires. American workers deserve to be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner, especially in this time of need. They need a lifeline, and it is up to us to provide it.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. On May 1, 2003, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, a bill that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

On July 4, 2000, an 18-year-old Brooklyn man was charged with allegedly slashing three men and threatening the life of another because he believed the men to be gay.

I believe that Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

DECRYING THE ETHNIC VIOLENCE IN KOSOVO

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to condemn in the strongest possible terms the violence 2 weeks ago in Kosovo, which claimed the lives of 20 persons, injured more than 600 others, displaced more than 4,000 individuals, destroyed more than 500 homes, and destroyed or damaged more than 30 churches and monasteries.

In a reversal of the brutal murders and ethnic cleansing carried out in 1998 and 1999 against Kosovar Albanians by the forces of former Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic, the perpetrators of this violence were the former victims—the ethnic Albanians. Their principal targets were Kosovo Serbs, although Ashkali and other minorities in the province also suffered.

There is no way to gloss over or disguise these events: They are a disaster of the first magnitude. Five years ago last week, I submitted the resolution that was adopted by this body, authorizing military action against the Milosevic government in order to rescue the persecuted Kosovar Albanians. Over the subsequent eleven weeks the United States and its allies successfully waged an air war, which resulted in the withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo. A United Nations Security Council Resolution created a protectorate administered by the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo—known popularly by its acronym UNMIK—under the military protection of NATO's Kosovo Force or KFOR.

Since the summer of 1999 the international community, working through these civilian and military structures, has attempted to pacify and stabilize the situation, rebuild the shattered infrastructure, and help guide the embittered and traumatized population toward eventual democratic self-rule. Resolution of Kosovo's final status was

understandably deferred until significant progress was achieved.

From thousands of miles away it is difficult to appreciate the scope of the effort that the international community has devoted to Kosovo. I might offer a very personal example. My older son, Beau, served for nearly a year in UNMIK as a lawyer, helping the Kosovars to build a legal system that would impartially dispense justice to all inhabitants of the province. Tens of thousands of other Americans, together with citizens of dozens of other countries, have similarly worked in civilian and military capacities for the last five years.

Although there has, in fact, been considerable progress in several areas, the recent violence graphically demonstrates that, on the whole, the effort is in danger of failing. The economy is in sad shape with more than half the population unemployed. Kosovar Albanians complain that the lack of action on final status has choked off any significant direct foreign investment, which is the *sine qua non* for economic development. But it would be irresponsible to move to final status before stability and democracy have been achieved—as clearly they have not yet been.

So where do we go from here? Kosovo is a complex problem, for which there are no simple answers. In fact, every policy in the short run carries significant downside potential. Nonetheless, we must immediately take several steps.

First of all, through KFOR and UNMIK, we must make it unmistakably clear to all the citizens of Kosovo that the violence must cease completely.

Second, all citizens of Kosovo must cooperate with KFOR, UNMIK, and the Kosovo police in identifying for prosecution the perpetrators of violence and the destruction of property.

Third, all displaced persons and refugees must be returned to their former towns and villages, guaranteed their personal safety, and granted assistance to rebuild their homes as speedily as possible. In this regard, I am encouraged by the commitment made by the Kosovo Assembly to establish a fund for the reconstruction of homes, churches, and other property destroyed during the March attacks.

Fourth, the United Nations should undertake a review of the structure and organization of UNMIK.

Fifth, the authorities in Pristina and Belgrade should reinvigorate and intensify their dialogue.

A resolution submitted by my good friend from Ohio, Senator VOINOVICH, and of which I am an original co-sponsor, makes many of these points.

I would add a few more important policy recommendations.

The so-called “benchmarks” established by UNMIK must be reviewed. I have supported the policy of “standards before status” whereby Kosovo must fulfill rigorous goals before the

province’s final status is considered. I still believe that, in general, this is the correct course. The precipitous calls by some people for abandonment of the benchmarks and rapid independence for Kosovo would, I believe, be a cure worse than the disease. The international community simply cannot reward murder and violence. “Riots before status” is not the answer.

Nonetheless, I believe that the UNMIK benchmarks have been too elaborately constructed. Few countries could completely fulfill their requirements. In the wake of the violence, the benchmarks should be streamlined and prioritized, with emphasis given to personal security, minority rights, and some kind of decentralization of government, although not the apartheid-like “cantonization” being demanded by politicians in Serbia.

If by the middle of 2005 the benchmarks on personal security and minority rights can be completely fulfilled, and significant progress made on the other benchmarks, then discussion of final status for Kosovo can begin.

We should do our best to strengthen the moderates in Kosovo and Serbia, but there are, unfortunately, very few such “good guys” on the political scene in Pristina and Belgrade. Short-term political expediency seems to trump principle, despite the occasional lofty sounding speeches. Most Kosovar Albanian leaders hesitated before publicly condemning the ethnic violence, Prime Minister Rexhepi being a very positive and conspicuous exception. General Ceku’s call for restraint on the part of members of the Kosovo Protection Corps was also helpful. In the future, all Kosovar leaders must get the message that rewards will flow to those who genuinely try to build a peaceful, democratic, multi-ethnic society.

It would be easier to be sympathetic to the cries from Belgrade to defend and give special rights to the Kosovo Serbs if Serbian politicians had not been so demagogically nationalistic in the weeks and months prior to the violence. The new Serbian Government led by Prime Minister Kostunica seems hell-bent on insulting the very international community that it needs for support in the Kosovo question, and in other matters.

Above all, the Kostunica administration has repeatedly thumbed its nose at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. In a speech in late February, Kostunica himself candidly explained: “This country is not a simple deliverer of human goods to The Hague tribunal.” No political campaign can justify this kind of know-nothing jingoism.

Then just last Tuesday the Serbian Parliament outdid even Kostunica’s blustering when it voted by a wide margin to pay all Serbian war crimes indictees at ICTY “compensation for lost salaries, plus help for spouses, siblings, parents, and children for flight and hotel costs, telephone and mail bills, visa fees, and legal charges.” The

measure was supported by deputies from the parties of ultra-nationalist Vojislav Seselj and of Milosevic. Both these gentlemen, of course, are currently residing in prison in The Hague. The party of Prime Minister Kostunica joined in voting for this measure, which, were it not so grotesque, might almost be labeled comic opera.

As long as up to 16 indictees, including three former Serbian generals, are openly living in Serbia, and the “butcher of Bosnia,” former General Ratko Mladic, is also probably there, the Serbian Government cannot expect much international support. The U.S. Government has just announced that it is suspending all economic assistance not used for democratizing purposes because of Belgrade’s unsatisfactory level of compliance with ICTY, and until it cooperates fully, Serbia will not be allowed to join NATO’s Partnership for Peace.

We can take some solace in the opposition to the Serbian Parliament’s resolution by a few smaller parties, including that of Defense Minister Boris Tadic, a genuine democrat and man of principle. During the Kosovo violence, Tadic, who has carried out a vigorous reform of the Serbian military and security services, proved that he has instituted civilian control by keeping the lid on hotheads calling for intervention, reportedly in cooperation with U.S. Admiral Gregory Johnson, NATO’s AFSOUTH Commander. There is a chance that later this year Mr. Tadic may run for President of Serbia against a candidate of Seselj’s party.

In order to get Kosovo back onto the right path, the U.S. Government must alter its policy. And make no mistake about it: Kosovo matters. It matters to the people of Kosovo. It matters to the people of Serbia. It matters to the stability of the entire area of the former Yugoslavia. It matters to the Balkans, since Serbia is the key to regional stability, and because the fate of Kosovo directly impacts ethnic Albanians in neighboring Albania, in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in southern Serbia, and in Montenegro. In that context, Kosovo matters to the security of all of Europe and, hence, to the security of the United States of America.

One thing is crystal clear: the Bush administration can no longer afford to relegate Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro, and Macedonia to the back burner of its international concerns. The administration has been living in an ideologically driven dreamworld in which victory in the Balkans was prematurely declared in order to get on with perceived higher priorities like national missile defense.

Let anyone think I am criticizing the focus on the war on terrorism in Central Asia and the Middle East, I am not. As early as the fall 2000 election campaign—nearly one year before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001—Presidential candidate George W. Bush announced that he would unilaterally withdraw U.S. ground forces

from the NATO-led peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo. His future National Security Advisor Dr. Rice echoed this misguided notion in a newspaper interview. The following spring, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, flying in the face of all objective evidence, declared that the problem of Bosnia had been settled three or four years earlier. Even in this body resolutions for withdrawal of U.S. forces were periodically submitted, but, I am happy to say, rejected.

Now we are waging war, attempting to quell resistance movements in Afghanistan and Iraq. We all know that our armed forces are stretched perilously thin, and obviously some troop adjustments have had to be made. U.S. forces in Bosnia have been reduced to little more than one thousand, or about 5 percent of their initial strength. Later this year NATO will turn over command of SFOR to the European Union, although some American troops will remain at our base in Tuzla, at the request of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Let me repeat that for my colleagues: the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the representatives of all three major groups—the Bosnian Muslims, Serbs, and Croats—concurring, requested that American troops stay on in Bosnia after the EU takes command of the peacekeeping force. The fact is that the United States has stature unequalled in that part of the world perhaps even higher in Kosovo than in Bosnia.

As in SFOR, we have drastically reduced our troop strength in KFOR. Given the events of the past few weeks, we dare not reduce it further. KFOR troops played a key role in quelling the Kosovo violence. I am told that of the various national contingents, American KFOR troops especially distinguished themselves.

Further proof of the Bush administration's downgrading the importance of the region was its abolishing the position of Special Coordinator for the Balkans. This position should be reinstated and filled by a senior career diplomat with extensive experience in Balkan affairs.

This new Special Coordinator should immediately engage the political leadership in Pristina and Belgrade in serious dialogue. I do not want to pre-judge what the final international legal status of Kosovo will be, although I cannot imagine that Kosovo will ever revert to direct control from Belgrade. Whatever the end result, direct negotiations between Pristina and Belgrade must be an integral part of the process. No other path would stand the test of time.

The United States was Serbia's ally in two world wars in the first half of the twentieth century. The United States is revered by Kosovar Albanians as their savior from the recent tyranny of Slobodan Milosevic. We have earned a credibility that no other country, or group of countries, possesses.

This administration should utilize this unique position, in coordination with other members of the contact group, to jumpstart the process of creating a safe, prosperous, democratic, multi-ethnic Kosovo.

GREY BERETS RISKED ALL IN IRAQ WAR

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, we have all heard the expression that "knowledge is power." At no time is this more true than when we are at war. Our military uses satellites, reconnaissance aircraft, remote sensing devices, and long-range patrols to learn where the enemy is, what he is doing, and how we can kill him.

But there is another type of knowledge which is just as essential if we are to be successful in combat. The side which knows and understands the weather the best has a large advantage.

Now, I know some may reply that we do not need to be concerned about the weather. We have smart bombs, stealth fighters and guided missiles. We have sensing devices which let us see in the darkness. But despite this high technology, we still have to give Mother Nature her due. Rain, clouds and low visibility can still ground aircraft or hamper operations. High temperatures affect men and equipment. Dust storms can rapidly render sophisticated machines and electronics unusable.

Our troops faced many weather extremes as we prepared for the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom a year ago. Extreme heat, thunderstorms, and dust storms all threatened operations. To learn more about Iraq's weather and to gather the data necessary to predict, if possible, weather patterns in that country, a group of brave meteorologists dropped behind enemy lines. They fed their information to the Air Force's 28th Operational Weather Squadron, known as "The Hub."

As detailed in a special being carried by the Weather Channel, the United States Air Force dropped its Special Operations Forces Weathermen, known as the "Grey Berets," behind enemy lines weeks before the beginning of armed conflict. The Grey Berets took exceptional risks to gather the data necessary for our Army, Navy and Air Force to conduct operations. For example, 5 days before the land invasion started, Grey Beret Sgt Charles Rushing waded ashore to gather information on fog, surf, and currents to enable a helicopter assault team to successfully seize key Iraqi refineries on the Al-Faw peninsula before Iraqi troops blew them up.

After the war began, the Hub reported on the biggest dust storm to hit the region in 30 years. The storm, covering over 300 miles, shredded tents and clogged engines and lungs. To the north, the storm created other problems, by dumping snow and sleet on Bashur Airport, the target of the most ambitious combat paratroop assault since World War II. The 173d Airborne

brigade was flying toward a mountainous drop zone while Cpt John Roberts, chief Grey Beret weather forecaster, had to make a call on whether the weather would lift long enough for 1,000 paratroopers to safely make their jump.

The actions and decisions of these two men are just two examples where our Grey Berets helped ensure the success of our troops. There are many, many more.

Mr. President, I commend the Grey Berets for their heroism and professionalism and their contributions to our armed services. I also thank the Weather Channel for bringing their achievements to wider public notice.

S. 275, THE PROFESSIONAL BOXING AMENDMENTS ACT

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I am pleased that the Senate has agreed by unanimous consent to pass S. 275, the Professional Boxing Amendments Act of 2004 (Act). I would like to thank the bill's cosponsors, Senators STEVENS, DORGAN, and REID for their commitment to professional boxing and the warriors who sustain the sport.

This amendment is designed to strengthen existing Federal boxing laws by making uniform certain health and safety standards, establishing a centralized medical registry to be used by local commissions to protect boxers, reducing arbitrary practices of sanctioning organizations, and providing uniformity in ranking criteria and contractual guidelines. It also would establish a Federal entity, the United States Boxing Commission—USBC—to promulgate minimum uniform standards for professional boxing and enforce Federal boxing laws.

Over the past 7 years, the Commerce Committee has taken action to address the problems that plague the sport of professional boxing. The committee has already developed two Federal boxing laws that have been enacted, the Professional Boxing Safety Act of 1996, and the Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act of 2000. These laws established minimum uniform standards to improve the health and safety of boxers, and to better protect them from the often coercive, exploitative, and unethical business practices of promoters, managers, and sanctioning organizations. While these laws have had a positive impact on professional boxing, the sport remains beset by a variety of problems, some beyond the scope of local regulation.

Promoters continue to steal fighters from each other, sanctioning organizations make unmerited ratings changes without offering adequate explanations, promoters refuse to pay fighters who have put their lives on the line, local boxing commissions fail to ensure the protection of boxers' health and safety, boxers are contractually and financially exploited, and the list continues. Most recently, we have learned of a federal law enforcement