

sums to finish relocating its capital, malnutrition is rising and thousands are dying from treatable diseases like malaria and tuberculosis. This tragic failure calls into question the Burmese junta's willingness and ability to protect and improve the well-being of its people.

Burma's people are not alone in facing the consequences of their government's actions: the country's deterioration poses a real danger to its neighbors and—in today's interconnected world—even to those far away. The drug trade and trafficking in persons are rampant; both flow across porous borders and spread corruption, political instability and disease.

America will persist in its strategy to increase international pressure on Burma by working with individual governments and regional organizations, such as the European Union, to seek to return the country to its people through a transparent, inclusive political process. The U.S. administration will continue to impose economic sanctions on the Burmese government, while insisting upon the unconditional release of Ms. Suu Kyi and other political prisoners; an end to attacks on civilians and other human rights violations; and a real dialogue leading to peace, democracy and national reconciliation.

In Asia, the U.S. will continue to collaborate with Burma's neighbors, including members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, who have a particular interest in seeing Burma's decline reversed. Asean leaders have already publicly called for the release of political prisoners and for the resumption of a national dialogue with all political stakeholders. On June 3, Indonesian Foreign Minister Hasan Wirayuda stated that "the junta [can] not deflect criticism of the Nobel peace laureate's detention by saying it was an internal matter. The truth is no country can claim that human rights abuses are its own internal affairs."

Finally, the U.S. will work in the U.N. to press for change in Burma. We are pleased that the U.N.'s Economic and Social Council will discuss Burma's forced labor practices in its July session. The U.S. will continue to pursue a U.N. Security Council resolution. As U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has said, America stands with the people of Burma, and we have not forgotten their dream of democracy.

The economic, political and public health situation in Burma has deteriorated to the point where the regime's combination of repression and its unwillingness—or inability—to meet its own citizens' needs pose a threat to the peace, security and stability of the region. We must all act together to help the Burmese people win the freedom and prosperity they deserve.

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

● Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on vote No. 175, I was necessarily absent due to a weather delay with my plane from New York (Delta 1959). Had I been present for that vote, I would have voted to confirm the nomination of Sandra Segal Ikuta to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.●

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR BOB DOLE

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Senator Bob Dole, a person who is often thought of as one of the most prominent political figures of our time. Perhaps former Secretary of State Colin Powell de-

scribed Senator Dole best when he said he is, "A plain-spoken man of strength, maturity and integrity."

This "plain-spoken" man from Oklahoma's neighboring State of Kansas is legendary for his brave sacrifice to our great country in World War II. In the war, he was a platoon leader in the distinguished Tenth Mountain Division in Italy. He was awarded two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star after being seriously injured in battle, but his service and sacrifice did not end there. After a long, determined road to recovery, a renewed faith in God, and loving support from family and friends, he began his political career.

After earning his law degree, Senator Dole served in the Kansas Legislature from 1951 to 1953. He came to Washington to serve in the House of Representatives in 1960. He was then elected to the Senate in 1968. His leadership skills gained swift recognition as he became chairman of the National Republican Committee in 1971 and Senate majority leader in 1984.

After Republicans lost control of the Senate in 1986, Senator Dole continued serving his party as Senate minority leader. In this capacity, he became known for his "watch-dog" tactics fighting against Democrat tax-and-spend, big-government policies. Thanks to his help in exposing the unrestrained behavior of the Democrats, the American people voted to put Republicans back in control of both Houses of Congress in 1994. After this overwhelming victory, Senator Dole was once again voted to the post of majority leader, making him the longest serving Senate leader in the history of the Republican Party.

I was privileged to serve with Bob Dole in this body from 1994 to 1996 and work on different issues with him. I supported him in 1996 when he was fighting tax increases and other excessive governmental policies.

After leaving the Senate to run for an unsuccessful Presidential bid in 1996, Senator Dole continued his public service by becoming chairman of the National World War II Memorial to erect a memorial on The National Mall to honor the sacrifice of the brave men and woman who served in the largest and deadliest war in history. He also served as cochair of the Families of Freedom Scholarship Fund to assist the educational needs of the families of victims of the September 11 attacks.

Through media appearances, speeches, two best-selling books, "Great Presidential Wit, I Wish I Was In The Book" and "Great Political Wit, Laughing (Almost) All the Way to the White House," and his personal World War II memoirs, "One Soldier's Story," Senator Dole continues to leave a legacy of the values and principles that have made this great country what it is today.

Bob Dole is a man of character and integrity, and I am proud to honor him with this deserving tribute today.

MARRIAGE PROTECTION AMENDMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the Marriage Protection Amendment. This poorly conceived, divisive proposal does not belong in the U.S. Constitution. To me, the Constitution is a sacred document, one that protects rights and preserves liberties, and we should not amend it lightly. Never once has our Constitution been amended to deny rights to a group of Americans. And we should not do it now.

This divisive and unnecessary amendment—which failed overwhelmingly when last brought before the Senate—would undermine rights like civil unions now enjoyed by people in many States throughout the Nation. This amendment would override State laws that grant fundamental protections such as hospital visitation rights, inheritance rights, and health care benefits.

Unfortunately, the White House and some Members of Congress think it is more important to attempt to divide our Nation over an amendment that they know has no chance of passing than to actually govern. The timing of this marriage debate and vote—just months before a heated midterm election—proves that this amendment is a political ploy to distract the American people from the issues that the President and his party are failing to address, like skyrocketing oil prices, the war in Iraq, and the lack of affordable prescription drugs.

Therefore, Mr. President, I join a broad range of opponents to the amendment, including former Republican Representative Bob Barr, various clergy groups, and countless voters in my State and across the country in opposing this amendment.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO JAMES REID

● Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize James Reid of St. Charles, MI, who earned the distinct honor of reaching the rank of Eagle Scout. James has earned such an honor through his outstanding dedication to his community and his commitment to citizenship.

James's rise to the rank of Eagle Scout is an achievement that is truly worthy of recognition. With this achievement, he joins a prestigious group of individuals, including U.S. Presidents, Members of Congress, astronauts, entertainers, businessmen, and clergymen.

James's dedication to community is evident in and around the St. Charles area. At a young age, he brought his community together through the fundraising and construction of the flagpole that now completes the city's monument to Lewis and Clark. In addition, he serves as an advocate for the homeless, working countless hours building