

route. Withering contrasts were made to our approach to Iraq. If I am not mistaken, we received these same accolades in 2003, when we allowed the EU-3—Germany, France, and the United Kingdom—to handle nuclear negotiations with Iran. And like then, these same accolades and multilateral approach have accomplished little. Instead, Iran's uranium enrichment program has greatly expanded, to the point where—as the IAEA notes—uranium hexafluoride has been fed into each of the 18 centrifuge cascades. There is almost no doubt at this point that Iran will ultimately have enough enriched uranium to create a nuclear weapon.

There have been so many red lines broached during the past 5 years, it is almost hopeless to begin creating new ones. I will not try. What I will say, however, is that the issue of Iran creating highly enriched uranium has now become almost moot.

Centrifuge technology is technologically difficult; of that, there is no question. The Iranians have failed to spend the usual time needed to test and measure their first centrifuge cascade before building new ones. But resolution of this potential problem is just a matter of time. The equipment is there. The necessary uranium and uranium gas are there. Thanks to Pakistan's A.Q. Khan network, the knowledge is there.

Sometime in the future—not immediately but sometime not too far off—we will be approaching the endgame of this situation. I do not know what form the endgame will take. I hope and pray it is short of military confrontation; after all, that is why we have pursued the diplomatic track as long as we have. That is why I still believe diplomacy is the only answer. But we should remember that we in the United States have a luxury of sitting thousands of miles away from a nuclear-armed Iran. That is a reassuring expanse of mountains, plains, and oceans. Others do not have this luxury. Israel, one of our closest allies, is much closer, easily within Iran's missile range and certainly within Hezbollah's. Israel's decisionmaking process is certain to take this vulnerability into account.

So how do we move forward from the IAEA's report? Over the next several months, our focus must be in securing a third U.N. Security Council resolution on Iran. The Russians and Chinese may well point to this recent report and drag their heels on further sanctions. They are excellent at that, on issues from Darfur to Burma to North Korea. But the point of the first two resolutions was to halt Iran's uranium enrichment, not to receive more documentation from the IAEA. Iranian uranium enrichment is still continuing. Therefore, I think it weighs heavily on the U.N. and the Security Council in particular to pass a third set of sanctions on Iran. These would need to be stronger than the past two resolutions; ideally, they would include serious pro-

hibitions on military and energy-related items, as well as nuclear equipment.

The time for foot-dragging is over. Every day that passes, that uranium hexafluoride becomes more enriched and the Islamic Republic draws nearer to a nuclear weapons capability. I believe that diplomacy is the best and only effective response to this growing threat. Therefore, Mr. President, it is time to pass the Iran Counter-Proliferation Act of 2007, to complement America's recent sanctions, and to pave the way for further U.N. sanctions. I was proud to introduce this bill with my colleague Mr. DURBIN, and I hope for quick passage.

MATTHEW SHEPARD ACT OF 2007

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

In the early morning of November 4, 2007, in Austin, TX, a man was beaten by a group of college-aged men screaming antigay slurs. Tony Baker, 29, was riding his bike home when three men called to him from a sidewalk. He stopped to engage them since he hadn't understood what they were saying, and the men approached him. When it became apparent to him that the men were shouting antigay insults and that they were hostile, he began to ride off. But it was too late. The men were already upon him and began punching and kicking him in the head, still allegedly shouting slurs. The beating reportedly lasted about a minute, and Baker ended up in the hospital with minor injuries. The police are investigating the incident.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Matthew Shepard 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.

LABOR-HHS APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to express my deep disappointment in President Bush's decision earlier this week to veto H.R. 3043, the fiscal year 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, Labor-HHS, appropriations bill.

This bill would have provided an additional \$8.2 billion in important health, education, and worker protection programs while remaining fiscally responsible. The President would have us cut funding from programs that help disadvantaged Americans while spend-

ing more than \$10 billion monthly in Iraq. What does this say to the American people?

The President claims he understands the value of education. The original intent behind the No Child Left Behind Act, NCLB, was to give every child the opportunity for a quality public education while holding schools accountable for teaching the skills needed to succeed. That is an insightful goal. But not providing adequate funding to operate crucial programs has the effect of leaving every child behind. The Labor-HHS bill would have provided an additional \$1.6 billion for NCLB programs, enough funding to provide title I services to 430,000 more disadvantaged children. The President's budget request provided a modest increase but also eliminated funding for school technology, school counselors, and arts in education. The spending bill also provided \$12.3 billion in increased funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA. The IDEA Program entitles children with disabilities to a public education and provides Federal funds to help schools with the cost. The President proposes slashing \$291 million from special education. Further, the President proposes reducing Head Start by \$100 million, thereby cutting 30,000 slots for children. What is this saying to America's children?

As you are aware, Mr. President, my home State of Maryland is fortunate to have many Federal agencies that employ thousands of hard-working Marylanders. The Social Security Administration, SSA, is headquartered there. We are all aware of SSA's resources being stretched to the limit. Currently, over three-quarters of a million individuals are waiting an average of 523 days for hearing decisions. The Labor-HHS bill would have provided the agency with a \$125 million increase over President Bush's budget request for administrative expenses. Funding provided by this bill would have barely scratched the surface of the ongoing claim backlog issue but is a step in the right direction. The President's decision to veto this bill forces older and disabled Americans to wait longer for their Social Security benefits. What does this say to America's seniors and disabled population?

We are also fortunate in my home State to have the National Institutes of Health, NIH, headquartered in Bethesda, MD. NIH funds significant health research at over 3,000 institutions throughout the U.S. and around the world. NIH funding supports research to find cures for diseases such as cancer, diabetes, stroke, and mental illness. These are health concerns that millions of Americans face every day. NIH-sponsored research offers hope for medical cures to millions of Americans. The bill added \$1.1 billion for NIH research as opposed to the President's \$279 million cut to NIH programs. His veto effectively closes the doors on much promising research and medical breakthroughs. What does this say to America's chronically ill citizens?