HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES
STAFF SERGEANT LEX L. LEWIS
Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to honor the life and heroic service of SSG Lex L. Lewis. Staff Sergeant Lewis died on July 15, 2011, when his dismounted patrol received small arms fire in Farah Province, Afghanistan. "He was serving in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He was 40 years old.

Staff Sergeant Lewis was assigned to B Troop, 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, CO. I urge all my colleagues to remember Staff Sergeant Lewis as a soldier who truly loved the Army. His mother Betty said, "He just liked being a soldier...this is what he wanted to do."

After graduating from high school, Staff Sergeant Lewis joined the Navy and was first stationed in Japan. He joined the Army later, in 1999, and bravely served three combat tours—two in Iraq and one in Afghanistan.

Staff Sergeant Lewis's commanders and fellow soldiers all agree that he was a soldier who exemplifies the proudest traditions of the U.S. Army. They often came to him for counsel and advice during difficult times. His decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, two Army Commendation Medals, five Army Achievement Medals, and two Army Good Conduct Medals.

Mark Twain once said, "The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time." Staff Sergeant Lewis's service was in keeping with this sentiment—by selflessly putting country first, he lived life to the fullest. He lived with a sense of the highest honorable purpose.

Mr. President, I stand with Colorado and people nationwide in profound gratitude for Staff Sergeant Lewis's tremendous sacrifice. He served proudly and honorably in Iraq and Afghanistan when his country needed him most. He served by his example and his sacrifice. I ask my colleagues to join me in extending heartfelt sympathy and condolences to Staff Sergeant Lewis's family.

OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to submit for the RECORD a report on the activity of a congressional delegation I led to Belgrade, Serbia, from July 7 to 10, to represent the United States at the 20th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. I did so in my capacity as cochairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission.

I was joined by my colleague from New Hampshire, Senator SHAHEEN, who also traveled to Sarajevo, Bosnia. Senator Shaheen is also a member of the Helsinki Commission. Our colleague from Alaska, Senator BINGICH, also participated on the delegation but was in Dubrovnik, Croatia, as part of the official U.S. Delegation to the 6th annual Croatian Summit of regional political leaders and European officials.

As the report details, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, or OSCE PA, had the excellent opportunity for the U.S. Congress to engage our European friends and allies, and to make clear to less friendly countries that our ties to the continent will not be diminished.

U.S. engagement also provides a means for us to advance U.S. interests by encouraging Europe to focus more on policy issues of concern to us, from democratic shortcomings within Europe such as Belarus to the new challenges and opportunities coming from North Africa and the Middle East and other parts of the world.

The revised Senate schedule made us miss the opening days of the Belgrade meeting, but we made up for that with an intense schedule from Friday to Sunday. All three U.S. resolutions and most of our delegation's amendments to resolutions were adopted, including a resolution I submitted on political transition in the Mediterranean region and amendments welcoming the arrest of at least war crimes indictee Ratko Mladic and calling for Turkey to allow the Ecumenical Patriarch to open a theological school in Halki.

Senator SHAHEEN and I also used the opportunity of visiting Belgrade to encourage Serbia's democratic transition. We met with President Tadic as well as the Speaker of the Serbian National Assembly, the chief negotiator in the technical talks on Kosovo-related issues, representatives of civil society, and of Serbia's Romani and Jewish communities. We came away from our visit impressed with the progress Serbia has made thus far. While there are lingering manifestations of the extreme nationalism from the Milosevic era of the 1990s, I believe there is a genuine commitment to overcome them. We should support those in and out of government in Serbia who turn this commitment into action.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the report to which I referred.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

REPORT OF THE U.S. CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION (COXED CARDIN) TO BELGRADE, SERBIA; SARAJEVO, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA; AND DUBROVNIK, CROATIA. JULY 7-10, 2011

Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD), Helsinki Commission Co-Chairman, and fellow Senator and Commissioner Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) traveled to the 26th Annual Session of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE PA), held in Belgrade, Serbia, from July 6-10, 2011.

The senators were able to do this despite a U.S. congressional schedule that overlapped with mine. They were able to travel to Serbia, Bosnia, and Croatia to witness political and security developments in the region and meet with political leaders. The senators were able to attend key events and meetings that helped advance issues important to U.S. interests.

The OSCE PA was established in 1994 as a parliamentary assembly for the 56 states of the OSCE. It is the world's largest and most inclusive parliamentary forum for the debate of fundamental values. The OSCE PA is one of the key institutions of the OSCE, which consists of 56 participating States. It is the forum for States to address common security concerns among the participating States and to take decisions by majority voting on a wide range of issues.

The OSCE PA meets annually to discuss issues such as human rights, democracy, the rule of law, economic and environmental concerns, and security. The OSCE PA is also a forum for countries to discuss issues of global significance, such as cyber security, counter-terrorism, and countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The OSCE PA is an independent, consultative body consisting of 220 parliamentarians from 56 states, including the United States and Canada. Annual Sessions are the chief venue for debating international issues and voting on a declaration addressing human rights, democratic development, and security concerns among the participating States and the international community.

The Parliamentary Assembly adopts its declaration by majority voting for resolutions coming from the OSCE PA. The declaration is adopted by the Assembly and is sent to the heads of the OSCE participating States. It can be binding or non-binding, depending on the nature of the resolution.

The OSCE PA is an important forum for discussing and debating issues of common concern to the participating States. It provides a platform for parliamentarians to discuss issues of mutual interest and to develop consensus on ways to address them.

The OSCE PA is also a key institution for promoting democratic values and human rights in the OSCE region. It monitors elections, investigates human rights violations, and promotes the rule of law. The OSCE PA also plays a role in promoting economic and environmental issues and in addressing cyber security and counter-terrorism.

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