

H.R. 45, the Senate bill contains provisions relating to settlement agreements between DOE and nuclear utilities and to backup storage.

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ASIAN ECONOMIC AND SECURITY POLICY

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, when we look at Asia these days, Americans' primary focus is on China and the many difficult challenges that we face in that relationship. Next on our list of what we are watching in the region is Japan where our economic and security relationship remains the linchpin of our presence in Asia. These days, however, Japan seems to get scant attention from either the public or the policymaking community. That is a mistake, but I will leave that issue to another day.

After Japan in our focus comes the Korean Peninsula where we are concerned particularly about North Korea and its nuclear weapons development, missile technology, military adventurism, possible economic collapse, and internal instability. As we continue down the list of important things to think about in Asia, we come to Indonesia and the future of economic and political reform and internal stability in that hugely important nation.

Some may differ with my analysis, but it appears to me that, right or wrong, these days, our nation is looking at Asia in this way.

Today, however, I would like to call the Senate's attention to two important developments in other countries in Asia, specifically Southeast Asia, that are not on this list. These developments have been reported in our media, but, generally, on the back pages. They should not be ignored, because they relate to America's broad strategy toward the region where our interests are in security, stability, and open markets.

The two developments are the passage by the Philippine Senate of a U.S.-Philippine Visiting Forces Agreement and the progress being made toward completion of a U.S.-Vietnam trade agreement.

After a decade of stable democracy and economic reform, the Philippines may be the strongest economy in Southeast Asia after Singapore. Security ties, however, have remained at a very low level since the end of the base arrangement in 1991. This changed dramatically two weeks ago when the Philippine Senate ratified the new Visiting Forces Agreement.

This arrangement, typical of the relationship we have with many of our allies, allows us to apply U.S. military law to American soldiers and sailors

overseas. Its ratification will permit us to renew joint military exercises, pay naval port visits, and develop a stronger and more cooperative relationship than we have had in the decade since we left Subic Bay and Clark Field. President Estrada and the Philippine Senate deserve great credit for their statesmanship in bringing these talks to conclusion.

The Visiting Forces Agreement also comes at an opportune time. Disputes between Southeast Asian states and China in the South China Sea are becoming more frequent. The financial crisis has forced most Southeast Asian nations to concentrate on internal economic issues. This agreement should give Southeast Asian countries more confidence in the U.S. commitment to the region, and, hence, serve as a long-term force for stability.

In the case of Vietnam, we appear to be getting close to a bilateral trade agreement, which will promote economic reform in Vietnam and allow us to grant them Normal Trade Relations status, NTR.

Vietnam, the fourth largest country in Asia and one that shares a land border with China, is an essential part of any regional policy. We have obvious historic sensitivities to address as we develop closer relations with Vietnam. We have taken a number of steps in the past few years—lifting the trade embargo, normalizing diplomatic relations, dispatching Pete Peterson as Ambassador, and concluding a Copyright Agreement, all in association with a commitment by Vietnam for full cooperation on resolving POW/MIA issues. As time passes, a normal and productive relationship with Vietnam will contribute immensely to stability and security in the southern Pacific.

We are now negotiating an agreement that would begin to open the Vietnamese market to foreign trade and investment. This will support economic reform and market opening in Vietnam while also creating new commercial opportunities for Americans in a market of 80 million people. The strategic implications of this agreement, which will move us down the road to a normal bilateral relationship with Vietnam, are important. It will strengthen Southeast Asia, reduce chances for conflicts in the wider Asian region, and place the United States in a stronger regional position.

Of course, an agreement must be meaningful in trade policy terms. It is not a WTO accession and, therefore, need not meet WTO standards, but it should include elements such as reform of trading rights and opening of key service sectors, in addition to other market-opening steps. For our part, if the Vietnamese are willing to conclude such an agreement, we should proceed rapidly to grant them Normal Trade Relations. This is in our trade and commercial interest, and also in our

strategic interest. We have an opportunity to integrate Vietnam more fully into the Asian and world economies. I encourage our Administration, and the Vietnamese government, to complete the Commercial Agreement expeditiously.

We should, parenthetically, also proceed to Normal Trade Relations with Laos, where a trade agreement has already been completed.

The Philippine Visiting Forces Agreement and the bilateral trade agreement with Vietnam, once completed, mean we have taken additional steps toward creating a post-Cold War framework involving open trade and security relationships in the Pacific. This is very much in our national interest.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, as the ranking member of the Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation and Federal Services, I want to stress the importance of the United States implementing in a timely manner the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, commonly referred as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

The Convention is an important multilateral agreement that serves to reduce the threat posed by chemical weapons. It bans the development, production, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons by signatory states. The Convention also requires the destruction of all chemical weapons and production facilities by signatory states.

The Convention does not, however, prohibit the manufacture, use, and consumption of chemicals that could be used as warfare agents or their precursor chemicals as long as these chemicals are used for legitimate peaceful purposes.

Although the Convention has been in force for 2½ years, the United States is not in the compliance because the administration has not yet submitted the required industrial declarations to the International Organization on the Proliferation of Chemical Weapons. This is a disappointment since the United States played a central role in spearheading development of this treaty.

Most of our allies have complied with their treaty obligations, but it is likely that they will not agree to a second round of inspections until the United States has submitted declarations and U.S. industry has undergone inspections.

The United States has the largest chemical industry in the world. This industry is involved in legitimate production, use, consumption, export and import of chemicals subject to verification under the Convention. The United States must serve as a model of

compliance with the Convention to build confidence with our friends and foes and also to ensure that chemical weapons are never used again.

On June 25, 1999, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13128 to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act of 1998, which Congress passed on October 21, 1998.

However, the administration still has not issued regulations for industry to comply with the declaration and inspection requirements under the treaty.

The American chemical industry is poised to comply with our treaty obligations. I hope the administration quickly issues these regulations so the United States is in compliance with our treaty obligations.

TRIBUTE TO NELSON RHONE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Nelson Rhone who will be retiring from the Senate on July 7, 1999. Nelson began his Senate career December 21, 1964, as a laborer with Sergeant at Arms' custodial service operation. During his tenure with the Sergeant at Arms office, Nelson also worked in the Legislative Garage as a garage attendant and driver. In 1988, Nelson was promoted to Labor Foreman in the Sergeant at Arms' Environmental Service operation.

That account of his career here does not adequately convey the affection and respect he has earned at all levels of this institution. He is one of those rare individuals who, by virtue of both his tenure and his character, come to represent all that is best in the Senate of the United States.

In describing him, the word that immediately comes to mind is "gentleman." These days, that can seem like a quaint or old-fashioned term, but it is the most accurate compliment for someone like Nelson, who, by personal example, has set a standard for others to follow. It is an understatement to say that we will miss him. He is a gem.

Now, after nearly 35 years of devoted service to the Senate, he is retiring to spend more time with his wife, Mary Jane, and his family. Nelson is an avid bowler and enjoys traveling. He and Mary Jane look forward to having the time to travel and spend more time with their friends and family.

Nelson has been a dedicated and valuable member of the Senate community, and I know all members join with me in wishing him many years of health and happiness.

MARCIA KOZIE

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, today Marcia Kozie, who heads up my State office in Fairbanks, will retire from Federal service. She has served in this capacity since 1981.

When I think of my Fairbanks office, I think of an advisor and friend, Marcia

Kozie. She knows everyone in town and stays current on all the issues involving Federal, State and local governments. If I want to know the whole story, I call Marcia. I know the old adage goes, "no one is irreplaceable," but Marcia's boots will be difficult to fill. She has trailblazed for me these many years and her calm demeanor and soothing voice can smooth out the many wrinkles we often encounter.

When you cross the threshold of the Fairbanks office, you are always welcomed by a cheerful smile, a kind word and a sympathetic ear. Marcia Kozie has always had these winning ways, even during the most difficult of times. We all sometimes shoot the messenger by mistake, but Marcia's demeanor has always worked like a charm. Her ability to see the glass half full instead of empty, her cool head in times of crises and her genuine concern for my constituency have been worth more to me and Nancy and my office than a ton of Alaska gold. You just can't buy this kind of service.

Even though Marcia made her way to Alaska via Vermont, New Hampshire, Colorado, and Texas, she lived in the Fairbanks community for over 19 years before she came to work for me. In typical Marcia fashion, she immersed herself in the community getting involved with her three children and their activities, her husband Walt's business and many philanthropic groups who provided a special insight into Fairbanks community affairs.

She told me in her first interview that even though she had not worked for many years, she was adaptable and proficient in whatever the task. She continued by saying this was a God-given talent and that she didn't think He had taken it away from her, yet. And I have never regretted that decision to hire Marcia. While her Federal service will end, I know she will be devoting her time to spreading those God-given talents around the community.

She will be missed by all the staff members in both the Washington, DC, and State offices. It is with deep appreciation and gratitude that I thank her for 18 years of a job well done. As a matter of fact, the mayor of Fairbanks has proclaimed today, June 30, 1999, as Marcia Kozie Day in Fairbanks.

Toodle-loo, my loyal friend. Thank you for your service to this country, the State of Alaska and the people of Fairbanks.

MEDICARE HOME HEALTH EQUITY ACT OF 1999

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, on June 10th we held a hearing on home health care in the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations Subcommittee where we examined how the so called "reforms" of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 were holding up. I continue to be-

lieve that the answer to that question is, "not well." That is why I am joining with my colleague from Maine, Senator COLLINS, the Chairman of the PSI Subcommittee, in introducing an important bill, the Medicare Home Health Equity Act of 1999.

Home health care agencies provide a vital service to many elderly Americans. In my own state of Michigan there are over 1.3 million Medicare beneficiaries. Over 100,000 of these beneficiaries use the services of Michigan's 223 home health agencies. People prefer to recuperate in their own homes, and it is also less costly for the government since the alternative is nursing home care which is extraordinarily expensive for the Medicare program.

I am concerned about potential access problems. Although HCFA and the GAO have reported that they have not seen a decline in access for beneficiaries, the home health care witnesses that spoke before the PSI Subcommittee all stated that they believed there was an access problem. In fact, Barbara Markham Smith, from the George Washington University Medical Center, testified that "many seriously ill patients, especially diabetics, appear to have been displaced from Medicare home care." Sometimes it takes a while for the people in the field to actually get the numbers back to the people in Washington, and I think this is one of those instances.

We all know that during the early 90's home health care expenditures grew at a rapid pace. According to the GAO, Medicare spent \$3.7 billion to pay for home health visits in 1990 compared to \$17.8 billion in 1997. This growth led to changes, like the interim payment system, (IPS) that were implemented under the Balanced Budget Act. While some of the changes under the Balanced Budget Act were good, some of the changes are now negatively impacting Medicare beneficiaries.

I have heard from many constituents regarding home health care changes under the Balanced Budget Act and the various regulations that HCFA has imposed. In fact, last year, I received some 1500 letters from both home health care providers and beneficiaries. I echo their concerns when I say that the interim payment system penalizes cost efficient home health providers, like those in Michigan, while rewarding higher cost agencies.

Not only does the IPS penalize agencies that attempted to keep their costs down in 1994, but the new regulations which HCFA has imposed on the agencies are quite burdensome. There is no more poignant story to demonstrate the undue burdens being placed on home health care providers than that of Linda Stock, a Michigan home health care provider. This month Ms. Stock testified before the PSI Subcommittee about the problems that