FLEXIBLE TRADE POLICY TOWARD CUBA

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise to discuss American relations with Cuba. Recently, I had the opportunity to travel to Havana with Senators BAUCUS and ROBERTS. We spent ten hours with Fidel Castro, in what has been characterized by the press as a marathon meeting. But more importantly, we had meetings with dissidents and Catholic Church representatives.

It was my first time in Cuba, and I went there with no pre-conceived notions although I did have the opportunity to be thoroughly briefed prior to our departure.

I returned from Cuba convinced that lifting the trade embargo and restrictions on travel, especially for educational exchanges, are extremely important steps in an effort to foster economic and political liberalization in Cuba. They are important steps but not for the reasons which are generally assumed.

As one Cuban told us, ending the American economic embargo on Cuba will not produce economic change. The Castro government has no interest in economic reform—even along the lines of that now seen in China or Vietnam. As the Minister of Economics and Planning explained, there is no program for privatization in the economy, insisting that capitalism does not work but ''pure socialism'' does. The government allows some private investments, mainly in farming, but the intent of the State is still to control the economy. Indeed, President Castro told us that he believed Cuba could not survive if it was a member of the International Monetary Fund and called the IMF the ''world's most subversive organization.''

While this was denied by the Foreign Minister, I came away convinced that the government does not want the American embargo on Cuba lifted because the lack of economic ties allows the government to blame the United States for its own economic failures. If the embargo was lifted, Cuba's leaders might find another excuse for their failed policies but it might make it harder for them to find widely acceptable excuses.

The Cuban people have voted already for change. Many have fled to the United States. One Cuban told us that social and economic differences are increasing. The population has declined over the last decade in part because people sadly see no future for their children. The average Cuban salary is said to be $11 per month. The Castro regime was described to us by those we spoke to in Havana as a dying dictatorship: aging, inefficient and corrupt.

In this environment we should not exaggerate America's influence. Castro will do everything to limit it. But we can start to build a basis for a future relationship with the Cuban people after Castro. The Congress can demonstrate our good will by a partial lifting of the trade embargo. We can demonstrate our good faith by allowing freer movement of Americans to Cuba and to do what we can to encourage Cubans, especially school children, to visit the United States on exchanges. The Congress should promote cultural ties and try to direct assistance to the Cuban people.

None of this will be easy. Nothing Castro said indicated to me that he was willing to permit, for example, Cuban school children to attend American elementary and secondary schools or colleges in significant numbers. Nothing Castro said indicated to me that he was willing to allow American aid, including medical supplies, to be given directly to the Cuban people.

But even if the hand of friendship is rejected, I believe we should still offer it. The future of Cuba is not Castro. President Castro said one clear truth: Cuba still suffers from an inherited history of four centuries of colonialism. Unfortunately, he does not understand that his form of paternal dictatorship perpetuates the same horrors he claims to abhor.

VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, it has been more than a year since the Columbine tragedy, but still this Republican Congress refuses to act on sensible gun legislation.

Since Columbine, thousands of Americans have been killed by gunfire. Until we act, Democrats in the Senate will read some of the names of those who lost their lives to gun violence in the past year, and we will continue to do so every day that the Senate is in session.

In the name of those who died, we will continue this fight. Following are the names of some of the people who were killed by gunfire one year ago today.

Clyde E. Frazier, 40, Chicago, IL; Ernest Jones, 57, Knoxville, TN; Jose Lopez, 29, Houston, TX; Elva V. Manjarrez, 35, Chicago, IL; Kimberly Meeks-Penniman, 39, Detroit, MI; Anthony L. Moore, 28, Memphis, TN; Donald Pinkney, 23, Baltimore, MD; James Riley, 26, New Orleans, LA; Void Sampson, 24, Philadelphia, PA; Michael A. Williams, 35, New Orleans, LA; and Unidentified male, 22, Newark, NJ.

One of the gun violence victims I mentioned, thirty-five-year-old Elva Manjarrez of Chicago, was shot and killed in a drive-by shooting while she was sitting in a parked car. No motive was ever established for her death.

We cannot sit back and allow such senseless gun violence to continue. The deaths of Elva and the others I named are a reminder to all of us that we need to enact sensible gun legislation now.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday, July 24, 2000, the Federal debt stood at $5,668,098,197,951.86 (Five trillion, six hundred sixty-eight billion, ninety-eight million, one hundred ninety-seven thousand, nine hundred fifty-one dollars and eighty-six cents).

Five years ago, July 24, 1995, the Federal debt stood at $4,938,385,000,000 (Four trillion, nine hundred thirty-eight billion, three hundred eighty-five million).

Ten years ago, July 24, 1990, the Federal debt stood at $3,161,847,000,000 (Three trillion, one hundred sixty-one billion, eight hundred forty-seven million).

Fifteen years ago, July 24, 1985, the Federal debt stood at $1,796,347,000,000 (One trillion, seven hundred ninety-six billion, three hundred forty-seven million).

Twenty-five years ago, July 24, 1975, the Federal debt stood at $535,417,000,000 (Five hundred thirty-five billion, four hundred seventeen million) which reflects a debt increase of more than $5 trillion—$5,132,681,197,951.86 (Five trillion, one hundred thirty-two billion, six hundred eighty-one million, one hundred ninety-seven thousand, nine hundred fifty-one dollars and eighty-six cents) during the past 25 years.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO INTERNS

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, today I extend my appreciation to my summer 2000 class of interns: Anna Gullickson, Kayla John, Sara Low, Charles Wishman, Tom Mann, Alyssa Rotschafer, MayRose Wegmann, Eric Bridges, Monica Parekh, Michelle Levar, Joe Plambeck, Ben Rogers, Robert Barron, Morgan Whitlatch, Veronica Hernandez, Cary Cascino, Daniel Myers, Linda Rosenbury, Ryan Howell, Jay Smith, SreyRam Kuy, and Jim Dunn. Each of them has been of tremendous assistance to me and to the people of Iowa over the past several months, and their efforts have not gone unnoticed.

Since I was first elected into the Senate in 1984, my office has offered internships to young Iowans and other interested students. Through their work in the Senate, our interns have not only seen the legislative process, but also personally contributed to our nation's democracy.

It is with much appreciation that I recognize Anna, Kayla, Sara, Charles, Tom, Alyssa, MayRose, Eric, Monica, Michelle, Joe, Ben, Robert, Morgan, Veronica, Cary, Daniel, Linda, Ryan, Jay, SreyRam, and Jim for their hard work this summer. It has been a delight to watch them take on their assignments with enthusiasm and hard

work. I am very proud to have worked with each of them. I hope they take from their summer a sense of pride in what they've been able to accomplish and an increased interest in public service and our democratic system and process.●

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. DANIEL C. WALL

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Mr. Daniel C. Wall, who will leave his elected position as Commander of The Sons of The American Legion, Detachment of Michigan, in August. For the last year, Mr. Wall has led the Michigan Detachment of the S.A.L. with wisdom and with grace, and has used his time in this position to aid the Veterans of the United States Armed Forces in an exemplary fashion.

Mr. Wall has served in the Sons of The American Legion for many years, and holds a Life Membership card from Robert A. Demars Sons of The American Legion Squadron 67 of Lincoln Park, Michigan. During his time as a member, he has held many offices within the S.A.L., including all offices at the Squadron level; District Commander, Adjutant, and others; State Commander, Adjutant, and Zone 1 Commander.

Mr. Wall was elected to serve as the State of Michigan Commander in 1999. During his time in the position, Mr. Wall focused much of his attention upon the education of his fellow members, so that they might know more about the purpose, programs, awards, officer duties and the benefits of their organization. He believed that this would not only help to recruit new members, but would also give current members a better appreciation for the many beneficial things that the S.A.L. does on a daily basis.

As Commander, Mr. Wall has also presided over the many efforts of the S.A.L. in the State of Michigan, including assisting local posts in their activities, initiating programs for Veterans, volunteering at V.A. homes and hospitals, and fundraising. In 1999, the S.A.L. raised over $514,000 for V.A. homes and hospitals, and over $181,000 for the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. In addition, Mr. Wall has served as a member of national S.A.L. committees.

I applaud Mr. Daniel C. Wall on the job he has done as State of Michigan Commander of the Sons of the American Legion. He has dedicated much of his life to improving the lives of the Veterans of our great Nation, and for this he is to be commended. On behalf of the entire United States Senate, I thank Mr. Wall for his dedication, and wish him continued success in the future.●

A TRIBUTE TO ''TALK OF VERMONT'S'' JEFF KAUFMAN

● Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today I would like to mark the end of an era in Vermont. Jeff Kaufman, host of Vermont's award-winning program, ''The Talk of Vermont,'' will hang up his headphones at the end of this week. After 5 years on the air in Middlebury, Jeff and his family are leaving the Green Mountain State for the arguably less green pastures of Southern California.

A fixture on Vermont morning radio and a catalyst for thoughtful and provocative discussion of the key issues facing our state and nation, Jeff has not only brought wit and wisdom to the airwaves, but he has consistently managed to recruit big-name guests—Lily Tomlin, Ted Williams, Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist—to our small-market corner of the world, while never neglecting lesser-known local voices. Above all else, Jeff does his homework—he is equally adept at understanding the intricacies of missile defense as he is the physics of baseball.

While living in Middlebury, Jeff did not just entertain his listeners on the radio, but he became a valued member of the community, whether it was raising money for flood victims or serving as a member of the Citizens of Middlebury.

I am certain that I speak for my colleagues in the Vermont Congressional delegation—each of us has had the pleasure of Jeff's unique brand of inquisition—when I say that he will be a tough act to follow. He has provided an extraordinary service to Vermonters who have benefitted from his professionalism, his insights and his curiosity. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Jeff for a job well done and to wish him and his family well in every future endeavor.

Mr. President, I ask to have printed in the RECORD a profile of Jeff from The Burlington Free Press, dated July 23, 2000.

The material follows:

[From the Burlington Free Press, July 23, 2000]

RADIO'S INVENTIVE ''TALK OF VERMONT'' IS ABOUT TO GROW SILENT

(By Chris Bohjalian)

It is an overcast weekday morning smack in the center of summer. It is hot and sticky, and there's absolutely nothing in the air that might be mistaken for a breeze.

I am leaning against the side of a gazebo in Middlebury during the town's annual celebration on the green, waiting for Jeff Kaufman, host of the WFAD radio show ''The Talk of Vermont,'' to arrive. The show is about to broadcast live from the commons.

Abruptly, a slim guy with hair the color of sand just after the surf has receded coasts across the grass on a bicycle with a copy of one of my books under his arm. He says something I can't hear to the engineer, who is battling with miles of wires and the sort of microphone that I thought existed only in radio and television museums, and the engineer laughs. Then he turns to me and introduces himself.

This is Kaufman, and no more than 90 seconds later—still without breaking a sweat, despite the heat and his last-minute arrival—he has me seated in a folding metal chair, and we are on the air. It is clear within minutes that he not only has read my most recent novel, be has read the ones that preceded it. All of them. He has read the column I write for this newspaper. He has read a surprising number of the articles I have written for different magazines.

You have no idea how rare this is.

I have done easily a hundred-plus radio and television interviews in my life, and the vast majority of the time the very first question I am asked is this: ''So, tell us about your new book.'' The reason? There is a not a soul in the studio other than me, including the person with whom I am speaking, who has the slightest idea what the book is about.

In truth, why should they? How could they? Think of the number of guests who pass through a radio or television talk show every week. It's huge, and it takes time to read a novel.

Almost every weekday morning for the better part of a decade, Kaufman has done his homework on his guests and then offered the state some of the very best radio in Vermont. Sometimes his show has been broadcast on five stations, and sometimes it has been on only one, but it has never affected the first-rate quality of the program.

It was three years ago that I met Kaufman on the commons in Middlebury, and I have come to discover that day in, day out he corralled terrific guests. Lily Tomlin one day, Ted Williams the next. One morning he might be moderating a live debate between U.S. Senate hopefuls Jan Backus and Ed Flanagan, and the next he might be chatting with Middlebury biographer, poet and novelist Jay Parini about—basketball.

On any given day, he was as likely to have an acrobat from the Big Apple Circus performing—literally—on the stool in his studio as he was to have an expert from Washington, D.C., on the proposed ''Star Wars'' missile defense system.

Now, alas, we are about to begin Kaufman's last week. He and his family are leaving for California in early August, and Kaufman will no longer be a fixture on Vermont radio. There is no question in my mind that this is a real loss—and not simply because Kaufman is a first-rate interviewer and radio personality. He was also a part of the community. He used his show to find food and clothes for those families that had to leave their homes after the summer flood of 1998, and to raise money to help build a new Lincoln Library.

Sometimes I wonder if Kaufman had the ratings he deserved, but regardless of whether he had 12 or 1,200 people tuned in, he never gave his audience a small-market effort.

Happy trails, my friend. We'll miss you.●

MS. LORIE FOOCE NAMED ACHIEVER OF THE MONTH

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, in October of 1993, the State of Michigan Family Independence Agency commemorated the first anniversary of its landmark welfare reform initiative, ''To Strengthen Michigan Families,'' by naming its first Achiever of the Month. In each month since, the award has been given to an individual who