

and helpful briefings I have ever heard. I have been a Wilhelm fan ever since, and I certainly value his advice and his suggestions.

General Wilhelm stated our vital national security interests very well when he said the following:

I see our future prosperity in the Americas, not in the Far East. . . . Forty-six percent of our exports flow within the Americas, 28 percent to the Far East and 26 percent to Europe. I see the balance shifting even more to the Americas over the first 25 years of this century. The future prosperity of the United States is linked to the Americas.

Throughout his career as a United States Marine, General Charles Wilhelm demonstrated uncompromising character, discerning wisdom, and a sincere, selfless sense of duty to his Marines and members of other services assigned to his numerous joint commands.

His powerful leadership inspired his Marines to success, no matter what the task. All Marines everywhere join me in saying to the general: Thank you and well done. The results have guaranteed United States security in this hemisphere and throughout the world.

In behalf of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, our congratulations to him and to his wife Valerie and his son Elliot on the completion of a long and distinguished career, and I trust more to come. God bless this great American and Marine. Semper Fi, General, Semper Fi.

APPROVAL OF CONVENTION 176

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, last week the Senate unanimously approved for ratification the International Labor Organization Convention 176 on mine safety and health. I thank the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, the distinguished Senator from North Carolina, for his committee's efforts in expeditiously approving this convention. I also thank the mining state senators from New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Montana, Kentucky, Nevada, Idaho, and my own West Virginia, who joined me in championing this convention.

Coal mining has long been recognized as one of the most dangerous occupations in the world. In the United States, the frequency and magnitude of coal mining disasters and intolerable working conditions in the 19th century created a public furor for mine health and safety laws. The Pennsylvania legislature was the first to pass significant mine safety legislation in 1870, which was later followed by the first federal mine safety law that was passed by Congress in 1891. Over the years, these state and federal laws were combined into what are today the most comprehensive mine safety and health standards in the world. Since the beginning of the 20th century, mine-re-

lated deaths have decreased from 3,242 deaths in 1907, the highest mining fatality rate ever recorded in the United States, to 80 deaths in 1998, the lowest mining fatality rate ever recorded in the United States.

These numbers stand in stark contrast to the recorded fatalities in other parts of the world. In China, for example, the government recently reported 2,730 mining fatalities in the first six months of this year. That is more than thirty times the number of fatalities recorded in the United States for all of 1999. And, this number does not even include metal and nonmetal mining fatalities in China.

Many countries in the world have national laws specific to mine safety and health. Yet, in most of these countries, the laws are often times inadequate. In many South American and Asian countries, national laws have not kept pace with the introduction of new mining equipment, such as long-wall mining machines and large surface mining equipment, which create new hazards for miners. Similarly, many of these countries do not require employers to inform miners of workplace hazards or allow for workers to refuse work because of dangerous conditions without fear of penalties. What is worse is that even if these countries do have adequate laws, in most cases, the inexperience and limited resources of their mine inspectors often means that egregious violations by foreign coal companies are never penalized, encouraging repeat violations.

As a result, miners in developing countries are exposed to risks and hazards that claim up to 15,000 lives each year. Severe mine disasters involving large loss of life continue to occur throughout Europe, Africa and Asia. The most recent accident to gain worldwide attention occurred in Ukraine in March of this year, when 80 miners were killed after a methane gas explosion because of an improperly ventilated air shaft.

The United States competes against these countries with notoriously low mine safety standards in the global energy market. However, the disparity in mine safety and health standards with which foreign and domestic coal companies must comply, places U.S. coal companies at a disadvantage by allowing foreign coal companies to export coal at a cheaper cost. This has contributed to a decrease in U.S. coal exports in the global energy market. According to the Department of Energy, U.S. coal exports to Europe and Asia have decreased from 78 million tons to 63 million tons between 1998 and 1999. The Administration projects that U.S. coal exports will continue to decrease to approximately 58 million tons by 2020. This reduction in coal exports falls on an industry that is already experiencing a steady decrease in the number of active coal mining oper-

ations and employment in the United States. Faced with strong competition from other coal exporting countries and limited growth in import demand from Europe and Asia, the United States needs to level the playing field as much as possible with its foreign competitors, and should encourage foreign governments to adopt safety and health standards similar to those in the United States.

Accordingly, representatives from the National Mining Association, the United Mine Workers of America, and the Mine Safety and Health Administration helped to draft a treaty in 1995 that would establish minimum mine safety and health standards for the international community. This treaty was based on the federal mine safety and health laws in the United States. Convention 176 was adopted by the General Conference of the International Labor Organization in 1995, and would designate that a competent authority monitor and regulate safety and health in mines and require foreign coal companies to comply with national safety and health laws. It would also encourage cooperation between employers and employees to promote safety and health in mines.

By encouraging other countries to ratify Convention 176, the United States can increase the competitiveness of U.S. coal prices in the global market place, while, at the same time, increasing protections for miners in all parts of the world. In addition, the United States can build a new market for itself where it can provide training and superior mine safety equipment to nations struggling to increase their mine safety standards.

The United States prides itself on having the safest mines in the world, while, at the same time, remaining a competitive force in the global energy market. This convention embraces the belief that other countries would do well to follow the U.S. example. I support this convention, and applaud the Senate for its approval.

RICHARD GARDNER URGES HIGHER BUDGET PRIORITY FOR U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, in an article published in the July/August issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Richard Gardner argues persuasively that at this time of record prosperity, America must commit itself to an increased budget for foreign policy in order to protect our vital interests and carry out our commitments around the world. He argues that America's security interests must be protected not only by maintaining a superior military force, but also by focusing on other international issues that are essential to our national security, such as global warming, AIDS, drug-trafficking, and terrorism. He asserts that