

Since Columbine, thousands of Americans have been killed by gunfire. Until we act, Democrats in the Senate will read the names of some of those who have 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.

October 19, 1999:

Jerry G. Bowens, 25, Memphis, TN;
Nathaniel Bryan, 20, Washington, DC;
Wayne Butts, 43, Atlanta, GA;
Arnold Handy, 19, Baltimore, MD;
Paul Johnson, 31, New Orleans, LA;
Russell Manning, 52, Dallas, TX;
Rebecca Rando, 25, Houston, TX;
Mark Smith, 31, Dallas, TX;
Kirk Tucker, 32, Chicago, IL;
Jermaine Wallace, 22, Baltimore, MD; and

George Williams, 19, Pittsburgh, PA.

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

VOICE OF AMERICA EDITORIAL

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, on October 18 the Voice of America broadcast an editorial entitled "Terrorism Will Fail," strongly condemning the terrorist bomb attack on the U.S.S. *Cole* in Aden harbor, which took the lives of 17 U.S. sailors. The editorial concluded: "U.S. policy remains unchanged. The U.S. will make no concessions to terrorists. The U.S. will bring to justice those who attack its citizens and interests. The U.S. will hold state sponsors of terrorism fully accountable."

This is unambiguous language, which reflects not only United States government policy but also the feelings of all Americans. Unfortunately, however, the bureaucratic road from writing, to approval, to broadcasting this editorial was anything but unambiguous. In fact, it revealed both initial bad judgment by the State Department, and the need for better vetting procedures of VOA editorials by the appropriate authorities.

VOA editorials are statements of American policy, so they are rightly cleared by the State Department for consistency with official U.S. Government policy. Regrettably, in this case the State Department initially vetoed the editorial's language. The reason for stopping the editorial was totally unjustified. It was dead wrong to stop the editorial because of fighting and casualties that were occurring elsewhere in the Middle East. American service men and women were tragically killed in this terrorist attack and a clear statement by Voice of America condemning the action should have gone out immediately.

Subsequently, the State Department fortunately disavowed the earlier veto of the editorial memo, saying that the initial veto memorandum "in no way reflects the views of the Secretary of State, the Department or the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs." Moreover, it stated that the initial veto memorandum had not been vetted or approved through appropriate channels.

It is inconceivable to me how anyone could advocate deleting an editorial condemning the cruel, cowardly, terrorist murder of American service men and women.

I hope and trust this occurred because of the understandable stress officials at the Department of State were under due to the tragic deaths from this dastardly act of terrorism in Yemen occurring at the same time the crises in the Middle East was also absorbing the attention of the Department.

Fortunately, as I mentioned earlier, the Voice of America did broadcast the editorial in its entirety.

AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to clarify my position on the vote we are about to take on the Agriculture Appropriations bill. I voted for the bill because it contains funding for a broad range of programs that are very important to farmers in New Mexico and the rest of the United States. But that said, I would like to express my opposition and disappointment at this time to the way this bill frames our national policy toward Cuba.

First, let me say that this bill is remarkable in that it represents a dramatic step forward in how the United States deals with restrictions on sales of food and medicine to designated terrorist states. After considerable debate among my colleagues on this issue, relative consensus has been attained that suggests that unilateral sanctions against countries like North Korea, Sudan, Iran, and Libya are not effective, and that any future economic policy in this regard must include the multi-lateral cooperation of other like-minded governments. Even more importantly, many of my colleagues have come to the conclusion that official sanctions on food and medicine is an inappropriate way to achieve our foreign policy goals. The logic here is straightforward: not only do these sanctions hurt those individuals most in need in these countries—the innocent civilians who are being oppressed by oftentimes ruthless regimes—but they also hurt American businesses that would directly gain from such exports. American farmers in particular suffer under these constraints, and I am convinced those constraints should be removed immediately.

I should emphasize here that the elimination of sanctions does not

imply that we as a deliberative body agree with the policy pronouncements or activities of terrorist countries. Quite the contrary, they are reprehensible and, as such, we will continue to register our opposition to them at every opportunity. But as a practical matter the elimination of the sanctions does suggest that we finally recognize that we cannot effectively punish dictators or despots through their own people. Perhaps more significantly in this regard, the United States should not be placed in the difficult position of defending such policies as, in my view, they run against some of our most basic values and traditions.

It is for this reason that the Agricultural Appropriations bill as it relates to Cuba is seriously flawed. What we have done in this bill is permitted the sale of food and medicine to most of these countries and, moreover, authorized U.S. public and private financing that would allow this to occur. But we have refused to apply these exact same provisions to Cuba. In the case of Cuba, we have permitted the sale of food and medicine, but we have prohibited U.S. financial institutions from assisting in this process. Of course, Cuba can still purchase food or medicine from the United States, but it must do so with its own capital, or with assistance from third-party financial institutions. In short, Cuba must somehow convince a foreign bank to lend it money to purchase food or medicine, an obvious liability given its current situation. Clearly this limitation placed on Cuba defeats the basic rationale underlying the bill, and makes the exercise of sanctions reform almost entirely symbolic in nature. The bottom line is that our farmers will gain little or nothing in terms of increased sales to Cuba, and that is just plain wrong.

This bill is also flawed in that it further restricts travel to Cuba, this after several years of moving forward in areas related to increased scientific, academic, social, and cultural exchange. I find this to be an ill-advised provision in that it runs counter to everything we have experienced in Eastern Europe, East Asia, and Latin America in terms of the dynamics of freedom and democratization. For a number of years now I have supported the right of Americans to travel to Cuba, and I continue to do so at this time. I have also suggested that we allow non-governmental organizations to operate in Cuba and to provide information and emergency relief when needed. Furthermore, I believe that Cuban-Americans with relatives still in Cuba should be permitted to visit Cuba to tend to family emergencies.

Let me state clearly that I personally deplore the Castro regime and its heavy-handed tactics toward its people. The lack of freedom and opportunity in that country stands in direct contrast to the United States, as well as most