

The Deputy Secretary General has already traveled to Baghdad to begin discussions with Iraqi President Jalal Talibani. The U.N., through a similar "Compact" for Afghanistan, raised billions of dollars for relief and reconstruction and built an international consensus on ways to improve the economy, security, and human rights situation in Afghanistan. Today, in part because of the U.N.'s role as a platform for international cooperation, Afghanistan has its first democratically elected parliament in more than 20 years; 4 million refugees have returned; 5 million children are back at school; 60,000 combatants have rejoined society; and the economy is growing.

These are only the most recent of a long list of ways in which the U.N. helps to safeguard American peace and prosperity. The U.N. currently maintains the world's second-largest standing army, which is keeping the peace in some of the world's most hostile environments. It is working to detect any outbreaks of avian flu and develop the first line of defense against a possible world pandemic, as the President noted in his National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza. It is providing humanitarian assistance and saving lives in volatile regions of the world. And it is developing an international legal framework and bringing those guilty of crimes against humanity to justice.

In addition to taking a central role in addressing these global problems and maintaining an increasingly important presence around the world, the U.N. has taken significant action over the past few months to look inward and improve its own efficiency, transparency, and accountability.

Over our July 4 recess, the U.N. General Assembly—with U.S. consensus—agreed to a slate of broad reforms, many of which had been recommended by former State Department Under Secretary for Management and current U.N. Under Secretary General for Management Christopher Burnham, that include an upgrade to the U.N.'s information technology systems to help better analyze and organize real-time financial data from computer systems spread around the globe and an acceptance of internal accounting standards. These particular actions were made against a backdrop of broader reform over the last 6 months, during which time the U.N. dismantled and replaced the discredited Human Rights Commission; increased staff and funding for internal auditing; created an Ethics Office; and enacted whistleblower and financial disclosure policies that are more far-reaching than those in the U.S. Government.

Mr. Speaker, the U.N. is an indispensable presence in the world, and it is absolutely necessary for maintaining peace and prosperity in the United States. Were the U.N. not to exist or were it unable to fully fund its programs, the U.S. would be forced to confront a rising tide of issues that are simply too numerous, complex, costly, and diplomatically implausible for us to handle on our own. The U.N., as the world's platform for international engagement, can only work when member states, especially the United States, actively engage with the organization and each other. Today—and in the future when we discuss U.S. dues to the U.N.—we will be sending a message to the international community. We must make sure,

in the interest of all Americans, that the message is one of cooperation, engagement, and support for the United Nations.

TRIBUTE TO SEVERO MARTINEZ

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2006

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Severo Martinez who passed away in Santa Fe on Sunday, July 16, 2006 surrounded by his loving family and friends. Severo's family and friends have lost a very special person and New Mexico has lost a patriot who answered his country's call early in his life to fight for democracy in Europe and the South Pacific.

Severo was born on May 7, 1916 in Chama, New Mexico. He loved to fish and hunt throughout northern New Mexico with his brothers, son, grandchildren, and nephews. My former Legislative Director Tony Martinez, Severo's great nephew, joyously recalls going on many of those outings with his uncle where Severo would always be ready to pass the time by telling some jokes, playing cards and sharing stories of his service during World War II and in the South Pacific.

Severo was a proud veteran of World War II where he served with the 58th Quartermaster Battalion in Europe and in the South Pacific. He was recalled to federal service as a member of the New Mexico National Guard during the Korean Conflict. As a forward observer he was awarded the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star. After release from federal service he remained in the New Mexico National Guard until his retirement at the rank of Major.

Severo was always very proud of the men he served with in the National Guard and loved them dearly. After his service in the Armed Forces and the National Guard, Severo was employed with the New Mexico Employment Security Commission for 39 years. His faithful and dedicated public service assisted many New Mexico Veterans and citizens to obtain employment and helped start new careers for them throughout New Mexico. Severo is a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a life member and charter member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Patrick Hurley Chapter.

To Severo's grandchildren: David, Will, Meagan, Ashley and Natalie, your grandfather lived through 90 years of extraordinary events throughout our country and world. His service during World War II and the Korean Conflict helped contribute to the preservation of democracy and freedom that exist today. That is something you should all be very proud of him for—in addition to the love he held for each of you as a proud grandfather.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my condolences to his children Vince, Norie, Kate, Becky, and the whole Martinez Family. I ask that my colleagues in the House of Representatives join me in honoring the memory and life of a proud veteran, proud father, proud grandfather and New Mexican—Severo Martinez.

HONORING GRETCHEN JENKINS ON THE COMPLETION OF HER INTERNSHIP

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2006

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the many contributions Gretchen Jenkins has made while interning in my Washington, DC, office. Gretchen, a resident of Lebanon, Tennessee, has been a wonderful addition to the office and a great servant to the constituents of Tennessee's Sixth Congressional District.

Gretchen must now return to the Volunteer State, where she soon will begin her junior year at my alma mater, Middle Tennessee State University. The political science major has been active on campus as a member of the Raider Democrats, vice president of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and a columnist for MTSU's Sidelines.

Gretchen has gained a wealth of congressional experience that I hope will serve her well in the future. During her time here, she has addressed constituent concerns, served as a friendly and informative tour guide of the U.S. Capitol, and has been first in line to attend briefings given by some of our Nation's brightest and most eloquent statesmen.

I hope Gretchen has enjoyed her internship as much as my staff and I have enjoyed her presence in the office. I wish her all the best in the future.

CONGRATULATING THE HICKMAN COMMUNITY HOSPITAL ON BREAKING GROUND FOR ITS EXPANSION AND RENOVATION

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2006

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today to celebrate a few wonderful new changes coming to the Hickman Community Hospital in Tennessee.

Patients and visitors at the hospital will enjoy updated dining facilities and improved patient rooms to name just two of the enhancements that will improve the quality of life and the quality of care at the facility.

A real team effort went into this project which was funded through corporate and individual donations. The Hickman community came together, worked hard, and made this progress happen. They deserve recognition for this achievement which is the sort of initiative that has helped make the hospital a Critical Access Hospital.

I also want to recognize Jim Houser, Jack Keller, their teams at Saint Thomas Health Services and Hickman Community Hospital, leaders in the community, and most importantly, those who pledged support and are making this project a reality.