In the case of Yellowstone Park, our three-member Wyoming delegation is working with our fine Governor, Jim Geringer, and with the Department of Interior in a sincere effort to craft an arrangement whereby Yellowstone can be reopened. It is not yet known whether that can yet happen, but if that is the case, the impact of this regrettable ''shutdown'' can be, at least to that certain degree, minimized—1997 will be Yellowstone's 125th anniversary.

The Smithsonian will be celebrating a birthday too. I trust that later today we will be able to call up and pass H.R. 2627, the House passed legislation authorizing the minting of a commemorative coin celebrating the Smithsonian's 150 years of existence. This legislation is being presently held at the desk, has been ''cleared'' on our side of the aisle and, I believe, will soon be ''cleared'' on the other side.

Swift passage of this legislation will be a clear and bright signal of our concern for this wonderful institution. Sales of this commemorative coin will help to minimize the financial damage of this unfortunate shutdown to the Smithsonian.

And beyond all that, I trust that in this holiday season we might be especially mindful of our duties and responsibilities to our Nation, our States, and our dear friends, family and neighbors as we deal with the vexing issues that divide us. Perhaps those eternal concepts of integrity, common purpose, trust, fair compromise and statesmanship can again carry us through this difficulty, helping us to responsibly agree as to the path that should guide us and so many future generations of Americans.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, I rise to speak about this crucial yet potentially devastating issue of raising the debt ceiling. It's certainly obvious why raising the debt ceiling is so crucial—the Government must meet its obligations.

However, I do find this whole exercise a devastating testament to the continuing excesses of spending.

Last year, I served on the bipartisan Commission on Entitlement and Tax Reform, which was guided through the deep swamps of entitlement spending by two remarkable and courageous men—Senator BOB KERREY, who served as our able chairman, and our former colleague, Senator Jack Danforth, who served as vice chairman.

From June through December, the Commission held a series of public meetings in which we looked for any and all ways to slow down the incredible pace at which entitlement spending is growing. Along the way, the Commission approved—by a vote of 30 to 1—an interim report which spelled out some highly sobering truths about Federal spending.

Perhaps the single most important finding in the interim report was that entitlement spending and interest on the debt together accounted for almost 62 percent of all Federal expenditures in 1993. Furthermore, according to the Congressional Budget Office, this spending will consume fully 72 percent of the Federal budget by the year 2003 if the present trends continue. These are expenditures that occur automatically without Members of Congress casting so much as a single vote. This ought to serve as a ''wake-up call'' to all of us that we are headed on a course to disaster unless we act affirmatively to change course.

By the year 2012—less than 20 years away—entitlements and interest on the mounting debt will together consume all tax revenues collected by the Federal Government. We stand to have no money left over for national defense, education, national parks—pick your program.

Unfortunately, the Commission concluded its business in December without reaching an agreement on specific recommendations for bringing entitlement spending under control. That was most disappointing to me. I offered my own solution, as did the Co-Chairs, Senators KERREY and Danforth, but the majority of the Commission would not endorse the necessary measures.

However, 24 of the Commission's 32 members joined in writing a letter to President Clinton, emphasizing the need for ''immediate action'' and outlining various policy options—some of which Senator KERREY and I have introduced in a retirement reform package to shore up the Social Security Program.

Each of us has an obligation—not only to our constituents, but to ourselves and our children and grandchildren—to confront these issues head-on. Whatever outrage and hostility we may encounter from today's defenders of the ''status quo''—and there will be plenty of it, a world of it—it will pale in comparison to the richly deserved scorn we will receive from future generations if we fail to have the courage to act on the impending entitlements crisis.

So as we act on the raising of the debt ceiling, let us remember what this means to our children and grandchildren who will be billed for this debt. That's why I supported the inclusion of a ''generational accounting'' chapter in the President's budget. We need to be reminded of what this debt means to future generations, and why defenders of the status quo who oppose our budget-balancing efforts should be called to account.

MARVIN STONE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Marvin L. Stone, the chairman and president of the International Media Fund, has issued a final report on a 5-year effort he headed to assist emerging journalists in the former Soviet Union in identifying their new role as skeptics, rather than employees, of the state.

Mr. Stone and volunteers from the U.S. newspapers and media have taught, trained, and conducted workshops to give a boost to men and women who were struggling to nurture new independent media in the post-Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

It was not an easy task. Mr. Stone reports that IMF encountered a bloated, entrenched, corrupting bureaucracy in the wake of the Communist collapse. And this bureaucracy, Stone adds, continues to fight a rear guard attempt at redemption—and a return to power.

The guiding principle brought to Central and Eastern Europe by Mr. Stone is the first amendment, a beacon that has kept America on course for more than 200 years. We can only hope that at some future date, it will be in the preamble of every constitution adopted by the countries of the old Eastern bloc.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the message from Chairman Stone be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD so that other Americans may learn of the work of this native Vermonter and the important contribution of IMF to sustain democracy in the post-cold-war world.

I have relied on his advice and his dedication to public service for a generation. All Americans owe him thanks for all he does.

There being no objection, the material was the ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

(By Marvin L. Stone)

Five years ago a few of us started a three-year project whose goal was both simple and straightforward: to give a boost to men and women who were struggling to nurture new independent media in the post-Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

It may cross the mind that we overstayed our leave by two years. The fact is that we, and others in the field, underestimated how difficult was the challenge. The Communists left behind a bloated, entrenched, corrupting bureaucracy. Even now it is obvious that these same apparatchicks are fighting a rear guard attempt at redemption—and a return to power.

So, while we are wrapping up our five years before the job is finished, we are eager to share our experiences with others who will continue what we have started. Perhaps the report on these pages will be of help.

Largely, ours is a story of going in cold to work with a skeptical bunch of journalists in countries as different as Estonia is from Albania, as Poland is from Hungary.

''Why are you here?'' was always question Number One.

It soon became known that although the International Media Fund was financed largely by U.S. government dollars, it had a fiercely independent Board of Directors and an army of volunteer American editors, publishers, broadcasters and academics willing to join in our effort. From the start is was understood that the U.S. government would not interfere with policy decisions of the Board.

Surveys by our own staff soon indicated what we had already sensed: that it was not going to be possible to try to build the new media from the top down. The ideological roots of anyone over 40 were too deeply implanted. So we decided to build from the bottom up. Training was aimed at younger newcomers starting to work in the field. We invited local universities to let us help train

their youngsters, the opinion-molders of tomorrow. And we also helped establish journalism resource centers to work with college-age students and professionals—and, yes, wannabees off the street. At the same time, we did not neglect business workshops, to help the new independent newspapers and broadcast stations survive in the competitive marketplaces of ideas and economics.

We've tried to put some numbers together (including our work over the last two years in Russia).

By our reckoning:

We conducted 29 workshops for about 1,300 broadcasters.

We arranged 14 special broadcast survey and consultation trips.

We conducted 13 business workshops for some 650 newspaper executives.

We held 22 journalism and business workshops, jointly held for about 1,000 broadcast and newspaper participants.

We established 14 university radio and television training facilities or stations.

We helped start 16 university student publications.

We worked with 19 Central and Eastern European universities.

And those figures do not include the participants at the great many workshops and training courses held at the six journalism resources centers supported by the Fund, or the training equipment supplied by the Fund to those centers, or the participation by Fund representatives as speakers or discussion leaders in numerous media conferences arranged by others in the U.S. and Europe.

Our donations of technical equipment is equally impressive. In fact, the Media Fund is leaving behind a substantial presence—giant printing presses, computer units, radio stations, television companies, journalism centers and university courses, none of which existed five years ago.

But beyond a check list is something more important. Our hundred or so American volunteer professionals made a lasting impression whenever they ventured—from Vladivostok in the east to Prague in the west, from Tallinn in the north to Tirana in the south, with Warsaw and Bratislva and Bucharest and other cities in between. And our own small staff, of course, made all this possible—a vigorous start to a job yet to be completed. We are leaving the scene early only because our primary source of funding no longer allows us the freedom and flexibility to carry out the mission for which we were created.

The labor of these five years is our legacy from those of us who have lived in a land with a free press to those journalist sin other lands who wish to enshrine democracy in the future.

THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF JUDGE COFFIN'S APPOINTMENT TO THE FEDERAL COURT OF APPEALS

Mr. COHEN Mr. President, 30 years ago, President Johnson wisely acceded to Senator Edmund Muskie, urging that Frank Coffin be nominated to fill a vacancy on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. Soon afterwards the President sent Senator Muskie a photograph of the two of them inscribed ''Dear Ed, Come let us reason together—L.B.J.'' This is the very message that Judge Coffin has been delivering to colleagues on the bench, advocates at the bar, and scholars across the country—''come, let us reason together.'' And for three decades now, jurists, lawyers, and academics have responded to this invitation to engage in a dialog about the law with the learned barrister from Lewiston.

Judge Coffin came to the law in a more simple time, before the age of mega-firms, multimillion-dollar verdicts, and television cameras in the courtroom. He hung out his shingle in Lewiston and practiced law the way many lawyers probably wish they could today, in a one-man firm servicing the day-to-day legal needs of his individual clients. His relationship with a fellow Bates College graduate, Ed Muskie, brought him into politics, and then, after almost a decade of service in Congress and the executive branch, he joined the bench.

From his vantage point on the first circuit, he has witnessed a revolution in the law, from the activist period of the Warren and Burger courts, to the new formalism of today's majority. Yet he has remained a pragmatist, examining the nuances of each set of facts, identifying the competing interests at stake, and then drafting an option that candidly expresses the reasons for the court's ultimate judgment. Judge Coffin's concern has been with legal craftsmanship, not trendy theorizing. The careful balancing of competing interests ''is not jurisprudential theory,'' he has written, ''but, done well, it is a disciplined process, a process with demanding standards of specificity, sensitivity, and candor.''

He is a product of the age of civility. Advocates who have appeared before the court, often in the harshest of disputes, aptly characterize him as ''a real gentleman, kind and decent, smart as a whip, formal and polite, a great judge.'' ''He has the kind of demeanor,'' one attorney wrote, ''where everyone comes out of court feeling good, even the eventual losers.''

He has dedicated the lion's share of his career to public life and believes strongly in the virtues of public service. ''I do worry about young people today,'' he has said, ''going into the most lucrative professions where they earn immense amounts of money rather than working in public service, which needs good people more than ever.''

For 30 years, the people of Maine, litigants before the first circuit, and the legal profession in general have benefited from the service of a good person—Frank Coffin. Lawyer, politician, jurist, scholar, he continues to contribute to the quality of our national dialog.

U.S. INTERNATIONAL AVIATION POLICY

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss a very important development in U.S. international aviation policy that occurred over the past year. I do not refer to any particular bilateral aviation agreement, although the number of new international air service opportunities created in 1995 was impressive and unprecedented. Instead, I wish to highlight the critical lesson we learned during the year and, hopefully, will continue to apply.

Simply put, the best way for the United States to secure the strongest possible international aviation agreements is for our negotiators to make decisions based on economic analysis with the goal of maximizing benefits for the U.S. economy. In other words, international aviation decisions should turn on what is best for our country, not which carriers can generate the most political support. In 1995, Transportation Secretary Peña did an excellent job in this regard and the results speak for themselves. U.S. passenger and cargo carriers are capitalizing on a plethora of new international opportunities, while the increased competition brings consumers lower air fares, reduced shipping costs, and greater choices.

This new focus on economic analysis, which I have advocated and enthusiastically support, is beneficial in several other regards. First, it has the practical effect of elevating U.S. international aviation policy to the status of a national trade issue. Second, it clearly defines the criteria the United States applies in assessing international aviation agreements and, by doing so, gives foreign nations a clearer understanding of what will and will not be acceptable to our negotiators. Finally, it prevents foreign nations from exploiting parochial disagreements between our carriers.

Looking ahead to 1996, it is imperative that sound economic analysis continues to be the guiding principle in our international aviation negotiations. We face a number of significant challenges, most notably aviation policy with Japan and the United Kingdom. Also, we have a golden opportunity to obtain an open skies agreement with Germany which would be a catalyst for further liberalization of air service opportunities throughout Europe. Next year is shaping up to be a very important year for U.S. international aviation policy.

Mr. President, let me emphasize that I believe the best bilateral aviation agreement for all parties involved is one which is open and permits market forces to determine what air service is provided in particular markets. Open skies agreements ensure consumers pay a competitive air fare, maximize consumer choice, and promote greater efficiencies for all carriers. Having made that important point, let me briefly turn to our relations with our three most important aviation trading partners overseas: Japan, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

As I have said in this body before, the major impediment to liberalizing aviation relations with the Government of Japan is the high operating costs of Japanese carriers. Due in large part to Japan's tightly regulated airline industry, Japanese carriers have operating costs significantly higher than United