

on human rights which must be buttressed by expanded cultural ties and educational opportunities.

The advocacy of a strong United States Ambassador coupled with the collective efforts of the American people and numerous nongovernmental organizations can do much to foster greater Vietnamese respect for international norms in the areas of human rights, democracy, and religious freedom.

Finally, approving the nomination of Congressman Peterson as Ambassador to Hanoi will greatly assist efforts already underway to advance United States economic interests in Vietnam and throughout Southeast Asia. Vietnam has made significant progress toward transforming its inefficient centrally planned economy to a market-based economy, and it is actively seeking foreign participation in its economic development. Vietnam's efforts to rebuild its infrastructure and modernize its economy present great opportunities for United States businesses in the areas of energy, telecommunications, health, education, tourism, and environmental protection. But for United States firms to compete successfully with the numerous foreign companies already doing business in Vietnam, the administration must negotiate and Congress must approve a comprehensive bilateral trade agreement. As Ambassador, Peterson will play a central role in expediting negotiations on an agreement which will safeguard U.S. commercial interests in the fastest growing region of the world.

There are some who have speculated about the administration's motives for normalizing relations with Vietnam at this time, questioning whether officials from the Lippo Group or other United States businesses with prospective commercial interests in east Asia sought to influence the decision in exchange for their campaign contributions to the Democratic National Committee.

As our colleague, Senator MCCAIN—like Congressman Peterson a former POW—noted at Congressman Peterson's confirmation hearing, "This rumor is entirely unsubstantiated by fact." President Bush and Secretary Baker put the United States firmly on the path toward normalization in 1989 when they drafted a "road map" whose goal was the establishment of full diplomatic relations.

The pace of normalization has actually slowed during the Clinton administration. As Senator MCCAIN stated during the Foreign Relations Committee hearing, the Clinton administration was worried about the political ramifications for the President in making a decision to normalize—with the veterans organizations and others—and was not possessed with concern about helping business interests, whether domestic or foreign.

In short, we have reached the point of preparing to exchange ambassadors because of the bipartisan conviction

that normalizing relations is in our best interests. It had nothing to do with foreign lobbyists or contributions to any Presidential campaign.

Peterson traveled first to Vietnam 30 years ago as an Air force fighter pilot. He served his country nobly, receiving two Silver Stars, several Bronze Stars, and two Purple Hearts. He flew 66 combat missions over Vietnam before his aircraft was downed near Hanoi on September 10, 1966. He then endured almost 7 years of unimaginable hardship as a prisoner of war, before finally returning home in March 1973.

Now he seeks to return to Vietnam, not as a warrior, but as an ambassador of peace, helping to heal old wounds and bring Vietnam into the world community after 30 years of isolation. It is a testament to Congressman Peterson's commitment to public service that he is willing to take on this difficult mission. I wish him God's speed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the confirmation of the nomination.

Without objection, the nomination is confirmed.

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President will be notified.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will return to legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate now go to a period for morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 12 noon, a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Geotz, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 240. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that consideration may not be denied to preference eligibles applying for certain positions in the competitive service, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 12:11 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 412. An act to approve a settlement agreement between the Bureau of Reclamation and the Oroville-Tonasket Irrigation District.

The enrolled bill was signed subsequently by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

At 2:05 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by

Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1003. An act to clarify Federal law with respect to restricting the use of Federal funds in support of assisted suicide.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent and referred as indicated:

H.R. 240. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that consideration may not be denied to preference eligibles applying for certain positions in the competitive service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following measure was read the second time and placed on the calendar:

S. 543. A bill to provide certain protections to volunteers, nonprofit organizations, and governmental entities in lawsuits based on the activities of volunteers.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-1490. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the military capabilities of the People's Republic of China; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-1491. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a violation of the Antideficiency Act, case number 95-12; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC-1492. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, a rule entitled "Indian Country Law Enforcement" (RIN1076-AD56) received on April 4, 1997; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

EC-1493. A communication from the Acting Director of the Office of Surface Mining (Reclamation and Enforcement), Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, three rules including a rule entitled "The Iowa Regulatory Program" (IA-009-FOR, HO-004-FOR, AK-005-FOR); to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-1494. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Policy, Management and Budget, transmitting, pursuant to law, an acquisition regulation (RIN1090-AA60) received on April 8, 1997; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-1495. A communication from the Deputy Associate Director for Compliance, Royalty Management Program, Minerals Management Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, notice of the intention to make refunds of offshore lease revenues and where a refund or recoupment is appropriate; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-1496. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, transmitting, a draft of proposed legislation to include American

Samoa in the Act of October 5, 1984; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-1497. A communication from the Chair of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report for fiscal year 1996; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-1498. A communication from the Acting General Counsel of the Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a rule entitled "Final Power Allocations of the Post-2000 Resources Pool" received on April 7, 1997; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-1499. A communication from the Acting Secretary of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "District Heating, Cooling, and Cogeneration: Benefits, Constraints, and Recommendations"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-1500. A communication from the Deputy Associate Director for Compliance, Royalty Management Program, Minerals Management Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, notice of the intention to make refunds of offshore lease revenues where a refund or recoupment is appropriate; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. DORGAN, and Mr. THOMAS):

S. 545. A bill to provide for the reorganization of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. GREGG, Mr. JEFFORDS, Ms. SNOWE, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. SMITH, Mr. MOYNIHAN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. REED, and Mr. D'AMATO):

S. 546. A bill to implement the recommendations of the Northern Forest Lands Council; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. LOTT, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. NICKLES, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. ASHCROFT, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 547. A bill to provide for continuing appropriations in the absence of regular appropriations for fiscal year 1998; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mr. ROBERTS:

S. 548. A bill to expand the availability and affordability of quality child care through the offering of incentives to businesses to support child care activities; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LUGAR:

S. 549. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide that certain cash rentals of farmland will not cause recapture of special estate tax valuation; to the Committee on Finance.

S. 550. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the gift tax exclusion to \$25,000; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. GREGG:

S. 551. A bill to amend the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 to make modifications to certain provisions; to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

By Mr. GREGG (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. JEFFORDS, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. SNOWE, and Mr. SMITH):

S. 552. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to preserve family-held forest lands, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. KERRY:

S. 553. A bill to regulate ammunition, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HARKIN:

S. 554. A bill to inform and empower consumers in the United States through a voluntary labeling system for wearing apparel or sporting goods made without abusive and exploitative child labor, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. ALLARD:

S. 555. A bill to amend the Solid Waste Disposal Act to require that at least 85 percent of funds appropriated to the Environmental Protection Agency from the Leaking Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund be distributed to States to carry out cooperative agreements for undertaking corrective action and for enforcement of subtitle I of that Act; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mr. HUTCHINSON, Mr. HELMS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. NICKLES, and Mr. SESSIONS):

S. 556. A bill to provide for the allocation of funds from the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself and Mr. INHOFE):

S. 557. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to exclude beverage alcohol compounds emitted from aging warehouses from the definition of volatile organic compounds; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. BIDEN (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 558. A bill to provide for a study and report regarding the potential recruitment, hiring, or retention of qualified former officers of the Royal Hong Kong Police by Federal law enforcement agencies; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DASCHLE (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY) (by request):

S. 559. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax relief to middle income families who are struggling to pay for college, to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide significantly increased financial aid for needy students, provide universal access to postsecondary education, reduce student loan costs while improving student loan benefits, to streamline the Federal Family Education Loan Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

S. 560. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide significantly increased financial aid for needy students, provide universal access to postsecondary education, reduce student loan costs while improving student loan benefits, to streamline the Federal Family Education Loan Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

By Mr. COCHRAN (for himself, Mr. HUTCHINSON, Mr. NICKLES, and Mr. SHELBY):

S.J. Res. 25. A joint resolution disapproving the rule of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration relating to occupational exposure to methylene chloride; to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

By Mr. DASCHLE (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REID, Mr. HARKIN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. KERRY):

S. Res. 70. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding equal pay for equal work; to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

By Mr. BROWNBACK (for himself, Mr. ROBB, Mr. HELMS, and Mr. BIDEN):

S. Con. Res. 20. A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress regarding the status of the investigation of the bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires in 1992; considered and agreed to.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. DORGAN and Mr. THOMAS):

S. 545. A bill to provide for the reorganization of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

THE BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS REORGANIZATION ACT

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to introduce legislation to reorganize and restructure the Bureau of Indian Affairs. I am joined by Senators DOMENICI, DORGAN, and THOMAS as original cosponsors of this legislation.

This legislation is virtually identical to the bill that was approved by the Indian Affairs Committee and reported to the Senate on January 26, 1996. Unfortunately, the Congress did not complete action on that bill prior to the end of the 104th Congress. This legislation is intended to build on the agreements contained in last year's bill and stimulate further discussions in Congress and among the tribes about the many problems in the management and operation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

I will not take the time of the Senate to reiterate the long history of efforts to reform the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Suffice it to say, after more than 150 years of proposals, reports, hearings, and other efforts, the Bureau of Indian Affairs remains a hindrance, not a help, to our Native American population.

Since 1824, the Bureau of Indian Affairs has been the principal agency of the Federal Government which is responsible for meeting this nation's trust responsibility to American Indians and Alaska Natives. Yet, based on the health, social, and economic conditions on Indian reservations, the Bureau has failed miserably in carrying out its responsibilities.

Just take a brief look at the statistics on native American quality of life.

Nearly one of every three native Americans in this Nation lives in poverty, including half of the families and half of the children under the age of 6 living on Indian reservations.

Unemployment on Indian reservations exceeds 25 percent, and the per capita income for an Indian living on the reservation is \$4,478.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated: