

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, is there an order?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized for 10 minutes in morning business.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Thank you, Mr. President.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RETURN OF AMERICAN POWS FROM VIETNAM

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to my Congressman. The House of Representatives is paying tribute today to our Vietnam prisoners of war. It was 25 years ago this month that those brave men began returning home to America.

Among those heroes was SAM JOHNSON. SAM was a prisoner 6 years 10 months 18 days and 23 hours, which he can tell you to this day.

All of us who know SAM know he is a fighter. He was called "diehard" by his North Vietnamese captors.

SAM was one of 11 prisoners whose total defiance to prison authority resulted in banishment to a high security prison that was dubbed "Alcatraz." The prisoners were placed in tiny cubicles in an earthen-walled facility that was dug out of the center courtyard of the North Vietnam Ministry of Defense in downtown Hanoi. SAM and the other 10 wore leg irons and suffered from severe malnutrition.

SAM's defiance continued to the end, until February 13, 1973, when SAM boarded a plane at Gia Lam Airport to return home.

Our Nation recognized SAM JOHNSON's contributions by making him one of the most highly decorated aviators of his era. During SAM's military career, he was awarded two Silver Stars, two Legions of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, one Bronze Star with Valor, two Purple Hearts, four Air Medals, and three Outstanding Unit awards.

Mr. President, I would like to note also that here in the Senate there are many heroes from among us from World War II, the Korean war and the war in Vietnam.

Today, 25 years after the POWs in Vietnam began to come home, it is also appropriate to recall the sacrifice made by our own colleague, my good friend, JOHN MCCAIN. JOHN returned from Vietnam after his own capture and imprisonment 25 years ago next month.

Patriots like Senator JOHN MCCAIN and Congressman SAM JOHNSON remind us of what makes America great—honor, courage, and duty. They enrich the Congress and remind us every day of the important responsibility we have as stewards of the young men and women in our armed forces. As we prepare for a possible conflict in Iraq, I have no higher priority than that those troops will get everything they need to do the job if they are sent.

As Americans we have many things for which to be thankful. But perhaps

we should be most thankful for the brave Americans throughout our history who have fought the wars to keep America free. It is their sacrifice that has preserved democracy. It is their sense of patriotism and duty that Americans must always embrace if we are to remain free. Commemorating this 25th anniversary is one way that we will make sure that Americans do not forget the sacrifices that have been made for us to be able to stand here in this Senate Chamber and speak on an unfettered basis and openly and freely.

I want to say that I am proud that SAM JOHNSON is my Congressman. I also want to pay tribute to his wife, Shirley. Shirley and SAM are friends of Ray's and mine, and have been for years.

But Shirley is a hero, too. Sometimes we do not talk about those who were left home for 6 years to raise the children, to give them the hope and strength and love that both parents would normally give. It is to the Shirley Johnsons, also, that we owe a great debt of gratitude, because she was there never giving up, making sure that America never forgot that some were missing and some were imprisoned. She, too, should be commended today on this 25th anniversary.

I am honored to serve with SAM JOHNSON and Senator JOHN MCCAIN. As we honor them, we make sure that those who came home know how much we appreciate them. And, most of all, we remember those who did not come home.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. MURKOWSKI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Under the previous order, the Senator from Alaska is recognized to speak for up to 20 minutes.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I thank the Chair and wish the President a good morning.

(The remarks of Mr. MURKOWSKI pertaining to the submission of S. Con. Res. 76 are located in today's RECORD under "Submission of Concurrent and Senate Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH of Oregon). The Senator from Texas.

Mr. GRAMM. I believe I reserved a block of time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 30 minutes.

Mr. GRAMM. Let me say to my dear colleague I will not take all of that time.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, SAM JOHNSON

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak on two topics. The first is that our dear friend and colleague, Congressman SAM JOHNSON, one of America's great warriors and one of America's great individuals, came home from Hanoi 25 years ago today, having been held as a prisoner of war for almost 7 years.

SAM grew up in Dallas. He graduated from Southern Methodist University. He went into the Air Force. He became one of the great pilots in the postwar period. He commanded the Top Gun school. He was a Thunderbird.

In fact, Senator MCCAIN loves to tell the story about the time when he and SAM were campaigning together in Texas—as all of you know, Senator MCCAIN was a great aviator in his own right and a great warrior and a real American hero—and he loves to tell the story when he and SAM were on a plane riding in the back and they came in pretty fast, and SAM calmly turned to Senator MCCAIN and said, "We're going to run off the runway." Senator MCCAIN said, "What makes you think so?" just as they hit the railing and went off the runway.

The point being that SAM JOHNSON was a great aviator. He was flying a mission over North Vietnam. He was shot down. He was taken to prison in Hanoi. The North Vietnamese correctly concluded that he was a diehard and a recalcitrant, so they put him in solitary confinement year after year, basically a dugout, a little dungeon.

After 7 years in prison, enduring almost unbelievable hardship, he came home 25 years ago.

Now, the remarkable thing about all this is not all the medals that SAM JOHNSON won. We honor those and we should. It is not really the hardship that he endured, though I doubt many of us would be capable of doing it. But what is remarkable to me is that after 7 years in a dungeon in Hanoi, SAM JOHNSON came home and started his life again. He never complained about the 7 years he lost. You never see him that he doesn't have a smile on his face. He is a sweet, gentle, loving man. It is remarkable to me that somebody could go through 7 years of that kind of hardship—hunger, exhaustion, fear, physical and mental abuse—and yet come back home and be all the things that SAM JOHNSON is.

I wanted, on this 25th anniversary of the day that he came home to America, to stand on the floor of the Senate today and say to our colleague, Congressman SAM JOHNSON, that we are proud of him and that we are proud to associate with him. For most of us, the highest credential we are ever going to have other than being members of our family and being associated with our kinfolks is that we served in Congress. Many of us get whatever stature we might have from the position we hold, a position that was given to us in trust by the voter. But SAM JOHNSON is one of those rare people who brought stature to Congress with him when he came. He is a wonderful man. I love SAM JOHNSON.

I think in an era where there are a lot of people who kind of think politicians don't represent the best that America has to offer, that somehow politicians aren't exactly the kind of people you want your children to grow up to be, I ask them to look at Congressman SAM JOHNSON. He is the kind

of person I want my sons to grow up to be.

On this very special day for him, 25 years ago coming home to America, being set free in Hanoi, I wanted to congratulate SAM and thank him not just for the service he provided during 29 years in the Air Force, not just for 7 years in a dungeon in North Vietnam, but I want to thank him for the service he is providing for America today. We appreciate that. I am very proud to have him as one of my Congressman representing me and my State. I am also proud to have him as a friend.

Mr. ALLARD. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. GRAMM. I am happy to yield.

Mr. ALLARD. My wife, Joan, and I are pleased to recognize that both Shirley and SAM are very close friends of ours. I had come to the floor to speak on another matter but I feel so fortunate to have been here at the time you are making these comments.

You are right on the mark. He is a tremendous individual. He suffered in a way that many of us cannot imagine. Both Joan and I are so enthralled with his positive attitude—both Shirley and SAM—that it makes him stand out as a remarkable individual, remarkable Americans.

I second your comments.

Mr. GRAMM. I thank my dear colleague from Colorado for adding to my comments.

THE HIGHWAY BILL

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, let me turn to my final subject today. As all Members of the Senate know, Senator BYRD and I have embarked on what for us is a crusade. It is a crusade to try to force the Federal Government to live up to the commitment that it makes to Americans when they go to the gas pump and fill up their car or truck and pay about a third of the cost of a gallon of gasoline in taxes, and they are told the taxes are being used to build roads, that this is a user fee tax where the money is dedicated to road construction.

As those of us who serve in Congress, as those who follow these matters very closely know, that commitment is not being fulfilled. Between 25 and 30 cents out of every dollar of gasoline tax that is paid by American motorists goes not for transportation needs, not to new roads, but instead is spent on everything but highway construction. This is a diversion of funds that violates the commitment that we have made to American taxpayers. At a time when many Americans this morning got up and drove to work and waited in what seemed to be endless lines of congestion, when people drove over potholes that were dangerous and, in some cases, caused damage to their car, and when people endured unsafe conditions. There are 31,000 miles of road in my State that are substandard. We have thousands of bridges that are structurally unsound. I think people are rightly outraged when they discover

that over 25 cents out of every dollar they paid in gasoline taxes, which they thought was going to highway construction, is in fact being spent on other things in Government.

Senator BYRD and I now have 54 cosponsors on our bill, with the objective of trying to force the Government to live up to the commitment it makes to the American people and require that when money is collected in gasoline taxes for the purpose of building roads, that that money actually be spent for that purpose.

Now, many of the things that we work on here have an effect, but after a long period of time, from the time that the actual work is done, and often especially when you are working on big issues that affect economic growth and inflation, it's hard to sort of pinpoint the positive impact on it. But if we can bring up the new highway bill and pass the Byrd-Gramm amendment, on May 2 States across America will get roughly a 25 percent increase in the amount of money that is available to fill up these potholes, to build new roads, to modernize the existing system, to reduce the delays and traffic jams and hazards that we all face on the road every day, and do it by taking the money away from all the programs that never should have gotten the highway money to begin with and spending the money for the purpose that it is being collected.

Senator BYRD and I, all week, have reminded our colleagues that we are running out of time. The highway bill expires on May 1. And all over America today, States are beginning to cancel contracts. Michigan canceled a major contract yesterday. We are having employees notified by highway builders that they are going to be laid off as of the 1st of May when this highway bill expires. Senator BYRD and I want to move on with this issue, bring it up. If people want to vote no, if they want to continue to take highway trust fund money collected in gasoline taxes, where we tell people the money is being spent for roads but where we spend it on something else, if people want to vote to continue that diversion, they have the right to vote for that. But 54 Members of the Senate have already said that they want to change it.

So I urge our leadership to bring up this bill and give us an opportunity to let the Senate work its will. It is very important that we not let the highway bill expire. It is very important that we get on with highway construction, which the country desperately needs. I also believe it is important, especially in this era of cynicism about Government that when we tell people that money is being collected in gasoline taxes, to go into a highway trust fund to be spent on roads, that that money be spent on roads, that it not be spent on other things. Fundamentally, that is what this issue is about.

So I am hopeful that in the week when we come back—we are going on

recess, perhaps tonight, and we will be back a week from this coming Monday—that we are going to be able to bring up the highway bill and let people decide where they stand on this issue.

And let me, as a final point, say that the Byrd-Gramm amendment does not bust the budget. The Byrd-Gramm amendment does not raise the spending caps. But what it does do is say that all these other programs that have been beneficiaries from the piracy that has occurred in the highway trust fund are going to have to give up that money so that it can be spent on roads.

Now, I know some of our colleagues have said: Great, if you spend this money on roads, we were planning to spend it otherwise. I have likened their attitude to a cattle rustler who steals your cattle and you come out and you arrest him and you catch him red-handed stealing your cattle, and his only response is, "OK, so you make me stop stealing your cattle, but where am I going to get my beef?" Well, that's not my problem. What we are talking about is doing what we tell people we are doing. So I'm not saying the programs that have pirated the trust fund aren't, in some cases, worthy. In some cases they are not worthy, but in other cases they are very worthy.

The point is that we collected the money to build roads, not to pay dues to the U.N.; we didn't collect money to pay for Legal Services Corporation; we didn't collect the money to use in welfare; we collected the money for the purpose of building roads. That's the purpose to which the money should be put and only that purpose.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. ALLARD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, it is my understanding that I have 20 minutes of time set aside.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. ALLARD pertaining to the introduction of S. 1636 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I yield the remainder of my time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNETT). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, at 12:30 p.m. today Senator MOYNIHAN and I wish to make some remarks on the floor. I ask unanimous consent that at 12:30 I be recognized.

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