

its goals of being independent, of joining the community of free democratic nations, and of providing better lives—free lives—for the people of Georgia.

It is high time the Administration took a strong position on the subject of the Caucasus and of Georgia in particular. So far, it has not only failed to reign in Russian efforts against Georgia, but by this very failure, it has insured that the Russian-promoted destabilization efforts will continue.

Administrative apathy on this subject is best illustrated by the astonishing lack of urgency that the State Department ascribes to placing qualified and dynamic ambassadors in these countries. Georgia has been without a U.S. ambassador for well over six months. No candidate has yet been identified, let alone brought to the Senate for confirmation, despite persistent and forceful requests by President Shevardnadze and other key leaders in Georgia for such an appointment.

The Administration has also been supporting the Russian “mediation” of the Abkaz conflict; this policy must be reversed. Russian “mediation” consists of injecting Russian peacekeepers into the region to separate the Georgian and Abkaz combatants. Their behavior in the recent fighting in Abkazia shows their true intentions: the best case scenario shows that the Russian peacekeeping forces did nothing to interdict the flow of separatist personnel and heavy weaponry into the region where the fighting was taking place. The worst case scenario has them actually providing weapons to the Abkaz combatants. This is unacceptable.

Allowing continued Russian control over this situation is tantamount to inserting the fox’s first cousin as a mediator between the foxes and the hens. The current situation insures that Georgia can only lose. It is time for the Administration to demand the removal of the bogus Russian peacekeepers, and to insist on their replacement by an independent force of peacekeepers. To do less is to acknowledge implicitly that Georgia remains within Russia’s sphere of control.

This matter also raises the issue of the continued presence of Russian military bases in Georgia. They are there despite the overwhelming opposition of Georgian citizens. These bases were established at a time when Georgia was in no position to repulse Russian advances. Russia has no legitimate national security claim on Georgia. Russia is no less safe—indeed it is safer—with a Georgia that is free, independent, democratic and with free markets close to its southern border. These bases—from which the perpetrators of the assassination attempts on President Shevardnadze are reported to have fled—must be closed. The United States must not accept the notion that Georgian independence can only be secured by Russian power. Nothing could be more alien to the truth and to our national values.

Mr. President, it is time for the Administration to state unequivocally that the stability and survival of an independent Georgia is a fundamental U.S. interest. That Russia’s collusion with the Abkaz is nothing less than Moscow’s effort to maintain control over sovereign Georgia and will not be tolerated; and that it is time to put an end to Russian Trojan horses in Georgia—the phony Russian “peacekeepers” and the military bases that provide Russia with the means to threaten Georgia’s future and to put U.S. interests at risk.●

#### TRIBUTE TO LAHAINALUNA HIGH SCHOOL OF MAUI, HAWAII

● Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate the students from Lahainaluna High School from Lahaina, Maui, who recently came to Washington, D.C., to participate in the national competition of We the People . . . The Citizens and the Constitution.

As you may know, We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution is a civic education program which seeks to develop young students into enlightened and capable citizens who understand and promote responsible participation in our democratic process. Students learn the history and principles behind our constitutional democracy through the use of the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.

These young students competed against 49 other classes from across the Nation, demonstrating a youthful and enthusiastic interest in the fundamental ideas that are imperative for gaining a better understanding of our government. We the People is not only a competitive event, but it is also the most extensive civics program to reach more than 26 million students from elementary, middle, and high schools across the country.

I would like to recognize these fine students for their accomplishments: Iao Eisenberg, Tiffany Fujiwara, Jasmine Hentz, Erin Lockhard, William Myers, Leah Nakamura, Ryan Ott, Michael Prieto, Julie Reed, Sal Saribay, Justin Serrano, Jeffrey Shelton, Yee Ning Tay, and Kerri Tsubaki. I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of their teacher, Mrs. Ruth E. Hill, and the District and State Coordinators, Ms. Jane Kinoshita and Ms. Sharon Kaohi, respectively. Without their dedication and leadership, our students would be unable to participate in this important program.

Mr. President, I commend all the students and teachers who participated in this program, and particularly the students of Lahainaluna High School who represented Hawaii in the national competition. It is always heartwarming to see students actively engaged in the learning process. I wish the students and teacher of Lahainaluna High School the best as they continue to pursue their future endeavors.●

#### TRIBUTE TO THE MARSH BILLINGS NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK

● Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, June 5, 1998, is a great day for Vermont and for the Nation as we open Vermont’s first, and the Nation’s newest, National Historic Park. On behalf of all Vermonters I want to welcome the National Park Service and express my deepest gratitude to Laurence and Mary Rockefeller for making this possible.

Vermonters have always drawn a special strength from the land. And as Vermonters, we have a responsibility to the land. I was proud to introduce for myself, Senator LEAHY and all Vermonters, the legislation that created this National Historic Park in 1991. A perfect “Vermont scale” National Park, its size fits our State’s landscape, incorporating many of the most significant attributes about Vermont: our stewardship of the working agricultural and forest landscapes, our dedication to conservation, and our commitment and respect for our towns and communities.

Mr. President, the beauty and significance of this site will now forever receive the same recognition as our other great National Parks, such as Yellowstone, Grand Teton, and Gettysburg.

George Perkins Marsh, Frederick Billings, and Laurence Rockefeller’s devotion and commitment to the issues of conservation, forest management, and agriculture have helped develop this nation’s attitudes for how we treat and respect our lands. Private land owners throughout the country have followed the example of these distinguished leaders. Today, those who work and own the land, and hold true to the ideals of Marsh and Billings, are this Nation’s most important stewards. The preservation and conservation of the Nation’s working landscape, and historic and natural resources are increasingly important and yet are becoming more difficult to maintain. The Marsh Billings National Park will forever serve Vermont and the Nation as a model for conservation.

I salute Mary and Laurence Rockefeller for their vision in providing this park to the people of Vermont and the United States. The Rockefeller family has given future generations of Vermonters, indeed all Americans, access to a truly historic and beautiful site. This is only the most recent accomplishment in Mr. Rockefeller’s more than 50 years of conservation leadership. Laurence Rockefeller was the first person ever awarded a Congressional Gold Medal for conservation work, and that award was richly deserved. I am proud to have been an original cosponsor of the legislation that granted him the award.

Mr. President, the people of Woodstock and the entire State of Vermont have lived a long time in harmony with the landscape. Our first national park not only recognizes the two founders of the American conservation movement,