thankful we have had experience helping us.

Also, during the drafting part of this bill, I sought out a person who had experience actually applying for export licenses. He served as a fellow on my staff for a few months and was also instrumental in drafting the bill.

I would be remiss if I did not thank all the people from the administration who spent hours showing me what they do or explaining how the system works.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANTORUM). The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. ENZI. With the indulgence of the Senator from New Jersey, I ask unanimous consent for some additional time so I can finish this explanation, which I think is critical to the bill.

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

Mr. ENZI. I thank the Senator.

Mr. President, some of the people working for the Federal Government right now have worked in a number of capacities and have seen export licensing from more than one side. I would be especially remiss if I did not mention the dedicated and time-consuming help of Undersecretary of Commerce Bill Reinsch and especially Undersecretary of Defense Dr. John Hamre. At one point, they had visited so much over the telephone about this bill that they caught an ''electronic bug'' and were ill for 24 hours.

On my own staff, I thank Katherine McGuire, my legislative director, who also works with the committee, and Joel Oswald, who is my committee person.

On Senator JOHNSON's staff, I not only have to mention his tremendous work and coordination, but I have to mention Paul Nash, who sat in on hours and months of meetings; on Senator GRAMM's staff, particularly, Wayne Abernathy; on Senator SARBANES' staff, particularly, Marty Gruenberg; the staffs from all of the different committee chairs who have been involved in this.

This bill has a lot of rabbits, and it has taken a lot of people to keep track of all of the rabbits, particularly as they multiply. I would like to tell you the debate we will hear on this bill is going to be fascinating. I would like to tell you that the bill will hold your attention, that you will be sitting on the edge of your seat, but that would be false advertising. If the bill were that thrilling instead of that detailed, it would have passed long ago.

This may be the most important debate we have this year, but I have to warn you, you can't tell the players without a program, and some parts of this debate don't even allow a program. We will ask you to pretend that you are James Bond, but the most exciting mission you will be assigned might make you feel like a proofreader in an atlas factory.

We need to talk about country tiering. That is where all the countries in the world are classified according to the risk to our country. We are going to talk about control lists; that is, the list of items we need to keep an eye on and have special instances in which they might need to be licensed. We are going to talk about a process for getting on the list and getting an item off the list. To really complicate the process, we are going to go back to our country list of risk and vary the risk by each item on the control list. Because that will cause some gray areas, we have this little handbook. This little handbook is a translation, a simplification of the rules that, if you are exporting a single thing, you better be aware of because you could be violating the law if you aren't following all 1,200 pages.

All of those things have to be blended together into something workable for industry and national security. I am prepared to explain any of those concepts, to go into great detail with anyone who needs that. Hopefully, we will not do that on the floor. I have been doing that for groups as small as one or as great as 500 for the last year.

But before you think that is all there is, we threw in two new concepts that have been mentioned before, so I will not go into detail on those except to mention that they are critical. We threw in mass markets and foreign availability. We recognized that if an item is available all over the world, probably the bad guys get that, too. And if a product is mass marketed in the United States, if it is so small and so cheap and sold at enough outlets that it could be legally purchased, easily hidden, and taken out of the country, that if you try to enforce that, you will probably not get anywhere either.

I could go on for a long time about the complexities in this bill—158 pages of detail. We have established a system that is transparent and accountable to Congress, requires recorded votes, has ways of getting things up to the President, and allows for the President to control some things. We recognized the deficiency in the present system of difficulty of objecting to licenses, objecting to things on the list, and we have cleared those up. Now we need to clear up the misunderstandings that there are with the bill.

Industry and national security—each side has the ability to walk away from this bill and cause its demise. It would be the simplest thing in the world. I commend business and the security agencies for their efforts, their teamwork, and their cooperation. They have read the reports that have come out on this. The Cox report has been referred to many times. The Cox report says this needs to be done. Congressman COX appeared before the Banking Committee and testified that this bill needs to be done.

I could go into other examples there. I am asking both sides, industry and security, to stay together, to keep working to stay in the middle so that we can have a system in place that will solve some of the problems of the United States while it increases exports. It can be done.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

ELECTIONS IN TAIWAN

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, during this generation we have witnessed the greatest expansion of democratic nations in history. From East Asia to Eastern Europe to Latin America and the islands of the Pacific, the blessings of democratic pluralism have expanded to the very bounds of each continent. It is in the proudest legacies of this Nation that the United States has played an essential role in facilitating the transition of these nations to democracy and their protection at critical moments.

From military defense to economic assistance, it is questionable whether Korea, Poland, Haiti, and scores of other nations would be free if it were not for the leadership of the United States. Now this generation of American leadership has a new challenge. As certainly as our parents and grandparents fought to ensure that these nations would have an opportunity to be free, it is our responsibility to assure that these fledgling democracies have an opportunity to remain free, a challenge that democracy is not a transitional state but a permanent condition of mankind, and the nations that would represent them.

There is one threat developing now before us to this proposition. It involves the people of Taiwan. During the late 1980s and 1990s, Taiwan underwent an extraordinary transformation from an authoritarian regime to a genuine democracy. Taiwan provided an example of peaceful political evolution from a military and authoritarian government to a true pluralist democracy with little violence, no military confrontation, and without a revolution.

After years of justifying tight security control, step by step, year by year, Taiwan created a genuine democracy. In 1986, a formal opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party, was formed. And in 1987, martial law was ended after more than 40 years. In 1991, President Lee ended the Government's emergency powers to deal with dissent and a new, freely elected legislature chosen by the people was created. In 1996, Taiwan's democracy had matured to the point that a Presidential election was held. Taiwan had fully developed. Democracy had come of age.

Now, in only a few days, on March 18, Taiwan will hold its second democratic Presidential election. The challenge to this democracy and the rights of freedom of press, worship, and assembly so central to maintaining human freedom are no longer under attack from within. The pressure is from Beijing. On the very eve of these elections, the People's Republic of China issued a statement that constitutes a new threat to Taiwanese democracy. China recently

issued its so-called white paper which warned that if Taiwan indefinitely delays negotiations on reunification, China will ''adopt all drastic measures possible, including the use of force.''

This goes beyond China's previous statements that it would take Taiwan by force only if it declares independence or were occupied by a foreign power. The more democratic Taiwan has become, the lower the bar appears to be for military intervention and a hostile settling of the Taiwan issue.

These aggressive statements obviously only serve to increase tension in the region and make a peaceful settlement among the people of Taiwan and the People's Republic of China much more difficult. This belligerent approach obviously has precedent, almost an exact precedent. In 1996, also on the eve of a Presidential election in Taiwan, the People's Republic launched missiles in a crude attempt to intimidate the people of Taiwan as they approached their election.

It now appears that the election of Taiwan's new President will be close. It is critical to the functioning of Taiwan's democracy that they thwart any belief in Beijing that intimidation will solve or contribute to the relationship between these peoples. It is critical that the people of Taiwan stand resolute and that their voters not allow these actions to intimidate them.

There is obviously an American role. The United States must respond to this ultimatum by making it absolutely clear that our position is firm; it is unequivocal. The dispute between Taiwan and Beijing will not be settled by military means, and the United States, in a policy that is not unique to Taiwan, will not idly witness a free people in a democratic nation be invaded or occupied and have their political system altered by armed aggression.

This, I believe, is the cornerstone of American foreign policy in the postwar period. It remains central to who we are as a people and our role as the world's largest and most powerful democracy. Any ambiguity will, on the other hand, only serve to embolden Beijing and can lead to dangerous misinterpretations and miscalculations.

There is, within this Congress, the opportunity to end any possible ambiguity. The House of Representatives has passed, and the Senate has before it, the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act. Senator HELMS and I introduced this legislation last year in the Senate. The House has spoken overwhelmingly in favor of our legislation, as modified. The question is before this Senate.

The legislation Senator HELMS and I have offered is designed to ensure Taiwan's ability to meet its defensive security needs and to resist Chinese intimidation. It imposes no new obligations on the United States. The legislation, as passed by the House, will simply strengthen the process for selling defense articles by requiring an annual report to Congress on Taiwan's defense requests and ensuring that Taiwan has full access to data on defense articles. It mandates the sale of nothing. It requires the transfer of no specific article. It does guarantee that this Congress understand the security situation, Taiwan's requests, and a flow of information. It improves Taiwan's military readiness by supporting Taiwan's participation in U.S. military academies, ensuring that their military personnel are trained, understand American doctrine, and could coordinate if there were a crisis. This is not only good for Taiwan, it is good for the United States, ensuring that if tragically there ever should be a confrontation, our own Armed Forces are in the best position to train people familiar with our doctrine and any mutual obligations.

Finally, it requires that the United States establish secure, direct communications between the American Pacific Command and Taiwan's military. Nothing would be more tragic than to enter into a military confrontation by mistake or misinformation. This ensures reliable, fast, secure information so the situation is available to our own military commanders.

The legislation does not commit the United States to take any specific military actions now, later, or ever. A full range of options are available to the President and to the Congress. It also does not alter or amend our commitments under the Taiwan Relations Act. Rather, it helps us to fulfill those commitments under the act and ensures that Taiwan's security needs are adequately met.

If we pass this legislation, it makes it less likely that we will become engaged in any future conflict because there will be no ambiguity, no chance of miscalculation because of Taiwan's ability to strengthen itself, and because of our mutual ability to assess defensive needs, less chance of a military calculation in the mistaken belief that either Taiwan will not be defended or have the ability to defend itself.

There is an important national interest in integrating the People's Republic of China into the world's economy and in promoting the growth of democracy and human rights in a nation that will play a vital role in the coming century. But our overall relationship cannot possibly develop quickly and positively if China continues to seek a military solution to the question of its relations with the people of Taiwan.

By not making our policy clear, by not assessing the military situation, we do not contribute to the avoidance of military conflict. We enhance the possibility of military conflict. This legislation, I believe, is a strong statement that avoids miscalculation and lessens the chances of conflict. President Clinton made a strong statement last week in support of a peaceful resolution of this issue when he said:

> Issues between Beijing and Taiwan must be resolved peacefully and with the assent of the people of Taiwan.

This formulation's emphasis on the ''assent of the people''—the words used by President Clinton—is new and important.

Together with this Taiwan Enhancement Security Act, I believe it is an important contribution in this current debate on the problems of Taiwan security. It is, most importantly, in accord with the language of the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act as passed by the House, which states, ''Any determination of the ultimate status of Taiwan must have the express consent of the people of Taiwan.''

The Taiwan Enhancement Security Act, therefore, and President Clinton's own statement in response to recent provocations by Beijing, are not only similar, they are identical. I believe the House of Representatives, in changing the Helms-Torricelli approach, has made a valuable contribution. I believe, for the maintenance of the peace and ensuring this Nation's commitment, that those nations which have chosen to be democratic, pluralist nations, governed with the consent of their own people—the commitment of this Nation that those nations will not by force of arms or intervention have their forms of government changed or altered will be enhanced.

Taiwan, today, is the cornerstone of that American commitment. Tomorrow, it could be Africa or Latin America. How we stand now on the eve of these free elections in Taiwan will most assuredly constitute a powerful message in all other places where others would challenge these new and fledgling democracies.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I ask what the pending business is.

Mr. SANTORUM. We are in morning business.

THE RISING COST OF FUEL

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to speak with my colleagues about the justifiably increasing concern among the American people about the increasing price of gasoline and other fuels.

The fact is that our gas pumps are fast turning into sump pumps for American pocketbooks. Just 2 days ago, the Energy Information Administration pegged the average current retail price for a gallon of gas at $1.54. That is the highest level in a decade for this time of the year.

Unfortunately, this is not the end of it. Prices are expected to soar beyond this height in the months ahead. In fact, the Energy Information Administration is projecting an average price of more than $1.80 a gallon of gas by Memorial Day, the start of the summer driving season.

That is, in and of itself, according to experts on oil pricing to whom I have spoken, an optimistic assessment. It is predicated on the promises of several OPEC nations that they will raise their production of oil after their March 27