

joined in the effort with the United States.

The Navajo Code Talkers made a major contribution to WWII. They provided instantaneous technical, detailed communication. None of their codes were written; they were only memorized. The Navajo Code Talkers came to be known as extremely dependable. They were called upon for tasks other than just code talking; they also had duties as Marines.

The Navajo code was used almost exclusively during the battle of Iwo Jima. They were credited for sending and receiving over 800 messages without an error.

"Were it not for the Navajos, the Marines would never have taken Iwo Jima," stated Major Howard M. Conner, signal officer for the Fifth Division.

Eventually there would be over 400 Marine Code Talkers who would play a vital part in the United States winning the war against Japan. In fact, the Navajo Code Talkers would participate in every assault the Marines took part in from late 1942 to 1945.

During the 3 years the Navajo Code Talkers participated in the war, Japanese Intelligence was able to break almost every U.S. Army and Army Air Corps code but not once were they able to break the Navajo code.

The Navajo Code Talkers are becoming more widely known by appearing in Veterans Day events, special honoring ceremonies, and there was even a Navajo G.I. Joe code talker toy developed. And now, a Hollywood film is being developed.

So I add my voice to the much-deserved recognition and appreciation going out today to the Navajo Code Talkers for their relentless efforts, sacrifice and dedication in the successful outcomes in the battle for the Pacific in World War II.

THE SPACEPORT EQUALITY ACT

Mr. REID. Madam President, I am pleased to join my distinguished colleague from Florida, Senator GRAHAM, as a sponsor of the Spaceport Equality Act.

Space commercialization holds great promise for the development of new drugs, ultrapure materials with incredible strength and flexibility, and even space tourism. To make space commercialization a reality, the US needs to support the growth of its domestic commercial space launch facilities or "spaceports." It's a sad state of affairs, but U.S. satellite manufacturers are facing increasing pressure to use foreign launch services due to a lack of a sufficient domestic launch capability.

The purpose of the Spaceport Equality Act is to ensure a strong U.S. launch capability. This act will provide tax exempt status for spaceport facility bonds, just like we do for publicly-owned airports and seaports. The government will not be directly funding the commercial space transportation

business, but creating the conditions necessary to stimulate private sector capital investment in these spaceports. Coupled with the development of "reusable launch vehicles," these spaceports will be "aero-space ports" that will accommodate both air and space vehicles. Reusable launch vehicles are essential to reduce the cost of access to space by a factor of 10 to 100 from its present level of \$2000/pound.

My home State of Nevada has an important role to play in space commercialization. As part of NASA's Space Launch Initiative, a public-private team will use the Nevada Test Site for orbital flights. This sets the stage for commercial space operations in Nevada as early as 2003-4.

The Spaceport Equality Act simply puts spaceports on equal footing with airports by treating them the same for purposes of exempt facility bond rules. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation which is essential to opening the space frontier for continued civil exploration and commercial development.

Mr. LUGAR. Madam President, earlier this month, the United States and the country of Kazakhstan successfully completed one of the most ambitious nonproliferation projects undertaken in history—the securing of one of the world's largest stockpiles of weapons-grade plutonium under the auspices of the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program. The security surrounding some three tons of plutonium—sufficient to make some 400 bombs—was enhanced and, commencing in 1998, the fuel assemblies containing spent nuclear fuel were packaged to prevent theft.

In August of 1998, I visited a torpedo factory in Almaty, then the capital of Kazakhstan, that had been converted to manufacture the big steel cannisters in which the plutonium-rich assemblies were packaged and sealed. The last cannister was sealed and lowered into a cooling pond in early July of this year.

Last week, the Washington Times carried a special report by Christopher Pala on this program under the title of "Kazakh Plutonium Stores Made Safe." I ask unanimous consent that this article be printed in the RECORD and urge all of my colleagues to inform themselves about a real success story in U.S.-Kazakhstan relations.

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

[From the Washington Times, July 21, 2001]

KAZAKH PLUTONIUM STORES MADE SAFE

(By Christopher Pala)

ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN.—U.S. officials last week voiced quiet satisfaction after one of the world's largest stockpiles of weapons-grade plutonium, located in a sensitive zone, was successfully made theft-proof in what the Energy Department called "one of the world's largest and most successful nonproliferation projects."

More than three tons of plutonium, enough to make about 400 bombs, had been stored in a fast-breeder reactor on the Caspian Sea shore in security conditions one early visitor

described as similar to those of an office building.

Today, the plutonium has been fully secured, said Trisha Dedik, director of the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Nonproliferation Policy, in an interview July 13 in Almaty, Kazakhstan's economic capital. "It's been a great success."

A day earlier, Miss Dedik and others took part in a ceremony at Aktau with Kazakh officials celebrating completion of the project.

The plutonium was produced by a BN-350 fast-breeder nuclear reactor on the arid northwestern shore of the Caspian, a few miles from the city of Aktau. Both the city and 350-megawatt power plant on the Mangyshlak Peninsula, the first-ever commercial breeder reactor, owed their location to considerable uranium deposits that were mined nearby.

The plutonium had been intended to be shipped to other parts of the Soviet Union for use as fuel in other reactors like it, but only one, the BN-600, was ever built. Located near Yekaterinburg on the eastern slope of the Urals nearly 900 miles north-northeast of Aktau, it ultimately took little or no plutonium from the BN-350, so the material just piled up.

The plant closed in 1999, at the end of its useful life.

After 26 years of providing electricity and water (by powering a desalination plant) to the Aktau region, the plant had an accumulation of 3,000 15-foot cylinders, called fuel assemblies, containing spent nuclear fuel.

About 7,250 pounds of weapons-grade plutonium could be extracted from the assemblies with relative ease, according to the Energy Department.

Nearly half the assemblies emitted little radiation and could be safely handled by workers wearing light protection. The other half were too "hot" to be handled by anything but robots. All spent years in a cooling pond the size of a football field at the plant.

"When I walked in there the first time back in 1995, it had all the security of a modern office building," said Fredrick Crane, an American physicist familiar with the plant.

"It was a clean and well-run reactor," said Mr. Crane. There were some guards, but otherwise all you needed was one code, like in an airport terminal, and you were in."

With each fuel assembly weighing 300 pounds, a couple of strong men with accomplices inside could spirit out the half-dozen cylinders it would take to make a nuclear bomb.

"It was attractive material, and it was accessible," said Miss Dedik of the Energy Department.

Just 500 miles to the south along the Caspian coastline lies Iran and what U.S. officials say is a covert nuclear-weapons program. Eight hundred miles to the southeast is Afghanistan, base and refuge of accused terrorist mastermind Osama Bin Laden, and due west, straight across the Caspian, Chechnya smolders.

"There are fast-breeder reactors in Western Europe and Japan, but the plutonium produced there doesn't accumulate like it did in Aktau. It's reprocessed pretty quickly," Miss Dedik said.

"There just aren't any big stockpiles. Remember, most weapons-grade plutonium is produced by dedicated reactors, controlled by the military, and they're usually much better guarded than this one was."

So in 1996, the government of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the United States quietly set up a program to immediately enhance security and, starting in 1998, to package the fuel assemblies to prevent theft.

Miss Dedik and Mr. Crane were among several dozen Americans who worked on the

project, which was funded by the U.S. Cooperative Threat Reduction Program under the Nunn-Lugar Act. The law was named for its sponsors, Sen. Richard G. Lugar, Indiana Republican, and then-Sen. Sam Nunn, Georgia Democrat.

A torpedo factory in Almaty that had been converted to civilian work was assigned to manufacture big steel canisters in which four or six of the plutonium-rich assemblies—some “hot,” some “cooled”—were packed together and sealed before being returned to the cooling pond.

Weighing more than a ton, the filled canisters are far too heavy to be handled by anything but a large robot, and all of them now emit lethal doses of radiation.

Last month, after nearly three years and \$43 million in U.S. support, the 478th and last canister was welded shut and lowered into the pond.

At the plant, Mr. Crane said, there are now manned gates, closed-circuit TV cameras, X-ray machines and turnstiles with magnetic cards, along with sensors that monitor the nuclear materials around the clock.

The packing is designed to last 50 years, but the plutonium isn't destined to stay at the closed Aktau plant that long.

Eventually, under a decree signed six months ago by Mr. Nazarbayev, the canisters will be taken 2,750 miles by train to the former nuclear-testing grounds at Semipalatinsk, on the other side of this country four times the size of Texas.

There, silos will be dug into the steppe and the fat cylinders will be buried, using a technique perfected in the United States.

“It will be the longest rail shipment of plutonium ever attempted,” said Miss Dedik. “They will have to design special transportation casks.”

And since the rail line wanders through what is now Russia and Kyrgyzstan, special loops will have to be built so that the plutonium stays in Kazakhstan during its whole voyage.

CONTROLLING THE PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, last week I came to the floor to express my concern about U.S. policy at the U.N. Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

This was the first effort by the international community to address the issue of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons at the United Nations. I believed it was imperative that the United States take a leadership role in the conference rather than being an impediment to progress.

It seemed to me, that the position staked out by Undersecretary Bolton in his opening statement at the conference—a position which I found to be unwarranted and unwise—had created the very real possibility the conference, because of the U.S. position, would be doomed to failure.

The conference did not fail—a consensus on a program of action was achieved. But the conference was far from a total success.

The conference had presented the international community with an unparalleled opportunity to take meaningful and concrete steps to develop and implement a clear international plan of action.

Instead the program of action, approved by the conference, is all too often silent on important issues, and all too often weak and equivocal in places where a course of action is needed.

The program of action does contain provisions addressing such critical issues as: establishing national regulations on arms brokers; the need for greater security of weapons stockpiles held by states; a commitment to carry out more effective post-conflict disarmament and demobilization programs, including the destruction of surplus stocks; and, criminalizing the illegal production, possession, stockpiling, and trade of small arms and light weapons.

If individual nations and the international community are able to effectively follow through in these areas it will mark a significant step forward on this issue.

And, just as importantly, the program of action calls for a follow-up conference, no later than 2006, the time and place to be determined by the 58th United Nations General Assembly.

Unfortunately, consensus on the program of action was only achieved after lengthy and sometimes acrimonious negotiations.

Many of the participants—especially those from sub-Saharan Africa, which has been hit so hard by the scourge of small arms and light weapons—have come away with a deep sense of disappointment that more was not accomplished.

And they are laying the blame for much of the conference's shortcomings squarely at the feet of the United States.

A number of critical issues were left out of the final program of action, including: failure to reach a commitment to negotiate international treaties on arms brokering or the marking and tracing of weapons; absence of any reference to regulate civilian ownership of weapons; no reference to protecting human rights; and, a lack of commitment to greater transparency on the trade in small arms and light weapons.

In addition, in all too many cases the forward looking action that was agreed on is to take place “within existing resources” rather than with the additional resources that are required to address this issue—or to only be carried out “as appropriate” allowing wide latitude for interpretation.

Considering the strong commitments for such issues as international agreements on brokering and the marking and tracing of weapons in the earlier drafts of the Program of action, it is very disappointing that these items were blocked from inclusion in the final document.

While some of the blame must also be allotted to others, the United States must face up to the role it played in impeding action on some of these issues—including in areas where the United States itself already has strong laws on the books.

For example, there were legitimate questions about what the appropriate language for the program of action should have been regarding private ownership of small arms and light weapons. But it is important to recognize that U.S. law and numerous Supreme Court rulings recognize that government regulations on private ownership of weapons is legitimate, notwithstanding somewhat spurious arguments about the nature of the Second Amendment raised by some who influenced the U.S. position at the conference.

The National Firearms Act and the assault weapons ban are just two of the laws that the United States has on the books which control private ownership of small arms and light weapons and pass constitutional muster.

For the United States to stand in the way of a non-binding document suggesting international efforts to seek ways, consistent with individual national constitutional and political structures, to control private ownership of small arms and light weapons is, to me at least, mind boggling.

This is especially important given the clear nexus between legal trade and private ownership and the growth of the international black market in small arms and light weapons.

According to the independent Small Arms Survey 2001 by the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, Switzerland, the black market often operates on an individual basis, where a small number of legally purchased guns are sold to illegal buyers across international borders.

Such individual black market transfers have a dramatic cumulative effect. The United States, with its huge stores of privately-held firearms, is both a source, a supplier, and a recipient of these transfers.

Although it is very difficult to quantify illicit arms trafficking in the United States, there are clear indicators that a number of criminal gangs operating on U.S. territory are active in the trafficking of small arms and light weapons into Canada and Mexico.

The United States is the largest source of illegal weapons for Mexico, for example, with this arms trade directly linked to the drug trade.

I believe that Ambassador McConnell and Assistant Secretary Bloomfield and others on the U.S. delegation acted to the best of their abilities to represent the United States. But I am also concerned that the unrelenting unilateralist position taken by the United States has served to undermine and damage our reputation as a leader in the international community.

The majority of delegations at the conference expressed displeasure with the U.S. attitude and approach to the meetings, sometimes in terms that verged on the undiplomatic.

For example, Camilio Reyes of Colombia, the president of the conference—who deserves recognition for