

the effect of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans and was cited by the White House as a positive part of the Federal Government's efforts in response to Hurricane Katrina. I have helped fund NISAC since its inception, including securing \$7 million for a NISAC facility in fiscal year 2003 and providing \$5 million more than the President requested for the program in fiscal year 2006.

Lastly, the Expeditionary Unit Water Purification, or EUWP, Program is a desalination program developed by the Office of Naval Research and tested in Otero County, NM. I have secured more than \$30 million for this project, and it has been money well spent. When the water supply at the Coast Guard's Loran Station at Port Clarence, AK was contaminated last summer, an EUWP unit was deployed to Alaska to create fresh water from brackish water for troops there. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, two EUWP units were deployed to Mississippi to provide fresh water to both victims and rescue workers. Clearly, the program is accomplishing its mission.

I am proud of these success stories and am glad to have helped three such successful programs secure the Federal funding they needed to do—important tasks for our Nation.

VISIT OF KAZAKHSTAN PRESIDENT NURSULTAN NAZARBAYEV

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I would like to bring attention to a visitor the White House plans to receive this week—the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev. My colleagues in this body can be forgiven if they haven't heard much about his visit; there aren't going to be any press conferences or state dinners to welcome him. In fact, the Bush administration has kept very quiet about the invitation it extended to President Nazarbayev, who is expected to arrive later this week. I don't blame them for trying to downplay the visit; President Nazarbayev is widely acknowledged to be a corrupt dictator and someone who has built a record of contempt for the rule of law, the quashing of a nascent democracy, and the destruction of a free press. This is not the kind of leader who should be granted the privilege of an official White House visit.

According to the State Department's most recent Human Rights Report, in 2005 Kazakhstan's "human rights record remained poor. Legislation enacted during the year seriously eroded legal protections for human rights and expanded the powers of the executive branch to regulate and control civil society . . . [The laws that were passed] encroached on political rights, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, and other human rights." The Justice Department and the FBI have accused President Nazarbayev—who has been in control of the country since 1990—of corruption and reportedly considered indicting him on bribery and other charges under the Foreign Corrupt

Practices Act. Instead they indicted his personal financial adviser, James Giffen, while identifying President Nazarbayev as the recipient of tens of millions of dollars in payoffs of cash and gifts in an oil lease deal.

President Bush has said that his goal is to spread democracy and the rule of law around the world. But this goal is hard to reconcile with his support for one of the world's most repressive and corrupt dictatorships.

Mr. President, the Washington Post recently published an insightful article on this issue, which I would like to have printed in the RECORD. I hope my colleagues will have the opportunity to read it and will join me in calling on President Bush to cancel this visit and send the message that there is no room in the White House for those who have such disregard for democracy and the rule of law. I ask unanimous consent that this article be printed in the RECORD.

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

WITH KAZAKH'S VISIT, BUSH PRIORITIES CLASH—AUTOCRAT LEADS AN OIL-RICH COUNTRY

(By Peter Baker)

AUGUST 29, 2006.—President Bush launched an initiative this month to combat international kleptocracy, the sort of high-level corruption by foreign officials that he called "a grave and corrosive abuse of power" that "threatens our national interest and violates our values." The plan, he said, would be "a critical component of our freedom agenda."

Three weeks later, the White House is making arrangements to host the leader of Kazakhstan, an autocrat who runs a nation that is anything but free and who has been accused by U.S. prosecutors of pocketing the bulk of \$78 million in bribes from an American businessman. Not only will President Nursultan Nazarbayev visit the White House, people involved say, but he also will travel to the Bush family compound in Maine.

Nazarbayev's upcoming visit, according to analysts and officials, offers a case study in the competing priorities of the Bush administration at a time when the president has vowed to fight for democracy and against corruption around the globe. Nazarbayev has banned opposition parties, intimidated the press and profited from his post, according to the U.S. government. But he also sits atop massive oil reserves that have helped open doors in Washington.

Nazarbayev is hardly the only controversial figure received at the top levels of the Bush administration. In April, the president welcomed to the Oval Office the president of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, who has been accused of rigging elections. And Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice hosted Teodoro Obiang Nguema, the president of Equatorial Guinea, who has been found to have millions of dollars stashed in overseas bank accounts.

But the Kazakh leader has received especially warm treatment, given that the same government that will host him next month plans to go to trial in federal court in January to prove that he was paid off in the 1990s by a U.S. banker seeking to influence oil rights. Although the banker faces prison time, Nazarbayev has not been charged and has called the allegations illegitimate.

In addition to Nazarbayev's upcoming visit, Vice President Cheney went to the former Soviet republic in May to praise him

as a friend, a trip that drew criticism because it came the day after Cheney criticized Russia for retreating from democracy. The latest invitation has sparked outrage among Kazakh opposition.

"It raises the question of how serious is the determination to fight kleptocracy," said Rinat Akhmetshin, director of the International Eurasian Institute, who works for Kazakh opposition. "Nazarbayev is a symbol of kleptocracy . . . and yet they are bringing him in. That sends a very clear signal to people inside Kazakhstan who are very well aware that he stole money from them."

The White House declined to comment because it has not yet officially announced the visit, but Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Evan Feigenbaum was in Kazakhstan last week working out details, and Kazakh officials said the trip will take place in late September. A spokesman for former president George H.W. Bush confirmed that Nazarbayev will visit Kennebunkport as part of his U.S. stay. "An old friend of his was in the U.S. and he extended an invitation," Bush spokesman Tom Frechette said.

An administration official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because the invitation has not been announced, said President Bush often meets with leaders of countries "that are not yet democracies" and uses the time to push for more freedom. "We've always been frank in our discussions with government officials from Kazakhstan about our concerns about lack of democratic movement, and we always press them for democratic reform," the official said.

Kazakhstan, a vast nation of 15 million on the Central Asian steppe, has emerged as an increasingly important player in the world energy market. With the largest crude oil reserves in the Caspian Sea region, Kazakhstan pumps 1.2 million barrels a day and exports 1 million of that. The Kazakh government hopes to boost production to 3.5 million barrels a day by 2015, rivaling Iran. U.S. and Russian companies and governments have competed for access to its oil.

Nazarbayev, 66, a blast-furnace operator-turned-Communist functionary, has led Kazakhstan since 1990, when it was part of the Soviet Union, and has since won a series of tainted elections. His government has banned or refused to register opposition parties, closed newspapers and harassed advocacy groups. Two opposition leaders were found dead of gunshots in disputed circumstances.

But the Bush administration considers Nazarbayev a friendly, stable moderate in a region of harsher, sometimes hostile dictators and has been hopeful he will open up and cleanse his government. The Kazakh government under Nazarbayev recently embarked on an anti-corruption campaign that has resulted in arrests of mid-level officials.

"I really do think he has learned how to be clean," said Martha Brill Olcott, a Kazakhstan specialist at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "He has learned a lot more about how you can promote to some degree divestiture [of assets]. Most of his holdings are, I wouldn't say transparent, but they're more so."

Others aren't sure. "When the United States is transparently soft on friendly dictators like Nazarbayev, it undermines the effort to be tough on not-so-friendly dictators," said Tom Malinowski of Human Rights Watch.

Transparency International, an anti-corruption organization, ranks Kazakhstan 2.6 on a 10-point scale, placing it 107th out of 159 countries graded. That's a decline from a 3.0 grade and 65th place in 2000.

"You don't have free elections, and the press is pretty much controlled by his family, and a significant portion of assets in

Kazakhstan are directly or indirectly controlled by his family," said Miklos Marschall, the group's regional director. "But on the other hand, unlike other Central Asian countries, he is willing to initiate some step-by-step reforms. From our perspective, he's not the worst."

Nazarbayev visited the Bush White House in 2001—before the Justice Department filed a case in 2003 alleging that he had taken bribes and before the president issued a 2004 proclamation banning corrupt foreign officials from visiting the United States. A State Department official said hundreds of foreign officials have been denied visas under Bush's proclamation but could not explain how it would not apply in Nazarbayev's case.

U.S. prosecutors have charged businessman James H. Giffen with steering \$78 million in bribes to Nazarbayev and one of his former prime ministers in the 1990s in exchange for influence in oil transactions. In addition to cash transferred to secret Swiss bank accounts, Nazarbayev, originally identified in court papers simply as "KO-2," allegedly received two snowmobiles, an \$80,000 speedboat, fur coats for his wife and daughter, and tuition for his daughter at a Swiss boarding school and later George Washington University.

Giffen's attorneys have argued that he is not guilty because his actions were sanctioned by the U.S. government. Giffen says he disclosed his activities to agencies including the CIA and was encouraged to continue for national security reasons. The Justice Department is appealing a court decision allowing the defense. The case is scheduled to go to trial Jan. 16.

MEDICARE

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, during the August recess, I heard from many physicians in Nebraska who are concerned about the looming cut in their Medicare payments. If Congress does not act soon, Nebraska's doctors will face a \$17 million loss next year. In addition, the cuts are scheduled to continue for the following 8 years if they are not reversed. During this time period, each Nebraska physician will lose \$27,000 annually.

Physicians want to serve Nebraska's seniors, but they simply cannot afford to accept an unlimited number of new Medicare patients into their practices if Medicare payments do not keep up with the cost of providing care.

In addition to listening to my constituents, I also think it is helpful to listen to experts when making policy decisions. Medicare payment policy can be quite complicated, so Congress established the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, MedPAC, to make recommendations to us. MedPAC consists of a group of health experts that annually makes Medicare policy recommendations to Congress. For next year, MedPAC recommended that Congress eliminate the scheduled payment cut and instead raise physician payments by 2.7 percent.

I think we should listen to Nebraska's doctors and policy experts and stop the Medicare cut. We are running out of time. Congress must act now to stop the impending cuts. America's seniors and our health professionals deserve no less.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO ARTHUR SAUVIGNE, MD

• Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure today to pay tribute to Dr. Arthur Sauvigne, a doctor who has made it his life's work to care for veterans. Dr. Sauvigne, known to most everyone as Art, has decided to retire from the Veterans' Administration after 33 years of remarkable service. His most recent role has been as chief of staff at the VA Medical Center in White River Junction, VT. Although we have been assured that he will continue to treat veterans in a part-time capacity at the VA, I take this moment to honor him for his years of dedicated service.

Art began his VA career as a resident in internal medicine at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. I like to think that Art's commitment to caring for veterans began with this residency because he has stayed with the VA in many different capacities ever since. Over the past 33 years he has held the following positions at the White River Junction VA: staff physician, associate chief of staff for ambulatory care, director of the emergency room, acting primary care service line manager, and acting specialty and acute care service line manager. Art became chief of staff in 1997.

In the time that my staff and I have known Art, we have been amazed at his breadth of medical and administrative knowledge and impressed by his vision. It seems that his ideas on improving service to veterans—especially veterans in rural areas—have, once implemented, served as national models. One needs only spend 10 minutes with Art to get the true sense of his passion for delivering service to veterans in their community. In fact, the White River Junction VA was a pioneer in his arena. Long before the Congressional mandate and establishment of the Community Based Outpatient Clinic, CBOC, a mobile clinic housed in a motor coach began seeing patients in 1989. In 1991, a small one-room clinic housed in the Burlington, VT, Vet Center became the predecessor of future CBOC's.

Art also has a firm belief that the VA, as a Government-run health care system, has a greater calling and higher need to provide excellence in care to its customers. He has long been involved in designing and implementing systems to improve customer services. Over the years, Art has actively endorsed and in many cases taken the lead in establishing standards of clinical practice, improving access, advancing types of services, and promoting the education of future health care providers.

Art's hard work was recognized when the White River Junction VA Medical Center was awarded the Veterans Health Administration's Robert W. Carey Organizational Excellence

Award in 2002 and 2003 at the "Achievement level." The White River Junction VA was awarded the Carey Award at the "Trophy level" in 2004 and was the "Circle of Excellence" winner in 2005. Art would tell you this recognition had little to do with him and everything to do with the incredible staff at the White River Junction VA, but I think his leadership made it a much easier journey.

Art's departure as chief of staff will leave a huge void. His indomitable spirit and limitless energy, even when faced by mind-numbing bureaucratic inertia, are irreplaceable. He will be hugely missed. However, we are grateful that he will still be caring for Vermont and New Hampshire veterans on a part-time basis in a role he still relishes—as a VA doctor.

My staff and I wish Art the very best in his well-deserved retirement. We also want to thank Art's wife Shirley and his family for sharing Art's time and energy with us through the years. I believe I can speak for all Vermont veterans when I say that we are deeply grateful to Art for making the VA health care system a more caring and professional place for veterans.●

TRIBUTE TO CAMERON MCKINLEY

• Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would like to make some remarks today about Alabama's 2006–2007 Teacher of the Year, Ms. Cameron McKinley. Ms. McKinley has been a technology specialist for the Hoover City School System since she left her successful career as a businesswoman in the marketing field over 10 years ago to pursue her dream of teaching. Within the Hoover City School System, Ms. McKinley has taught computer education, instructional technology, and summer technology camps.

Ms. McKinley, a magna cum laude graduate of the University of Alabama with a bachelor's degree in corporate finance/investment management and marketing, is a national board certified teacher.

I would like to commend Ms. McKinley's efforts on behalf of her students, and sincerely congratulate her for this very high honor. I appreciate her dedication to educate our children, as we know that an investment in our children is one of the most important investments that we can make as a nation.

Ms. McKinley's decision to change careers to give her life to our children is a wonderful act and it is made all the more remarkable for being selected as Teacher of the Year. This is, indeed, a heartwarming story. With Ms. McKinley's help, and the aid of other teachers like her, we will continue to raise up quality leaders that will serve our country and our children in the years to come.●