

As the Director of Central Intelligence, George Tenet testified publicly in 2004, “the IC judged in the mid-1990s that North Korea had produced one, possibly two, nuclear weapons. The 8000 rods the North [now] claims to have processed into plutonium metal would provide enough plutonium for several more.”

But that is the past; our problem now is to find a way forward. For far too many months we have been waiting on the sidelines, hoping, passively, that conditions will turn our way. We have been distracted by Iraq—it took a series of missile launches and the actual detonation of a nuclear device for us to get fully engaged again. And still we wait for the Six Party Talks to reconvene.

I welcome the news that North Korea has agreed to come back to the Six Party Talks. That is a good starting point, but it cannot be the end point; the Six Party process has dragged on for years now, and the only objective result has been that Kim Jong Il now has nuclear weapons. There must be results that come from these talks, and we must have in place benchmarks for what success means. I hope that we can convince Kim Jong Il to give up his nuclear weapons, but history does not provide a great deal of reassurance on that score. At a minimum, we should seek steps in that direction, such as partial dismantlement or a freeze on further production of fissile material, as a starting point.

Ultimately, North Korea needs to be brought back into the international fold. Unfortunately, we can't do that if we signal that our true desire is “regime change” and we continue to refuse to consider other options, such as direct negotiations. When dealing with such an important matter to our national security, we should not keep any option off the table. It is high time for a change of course in President Bush's North Korea policy.

#### SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I rise to make a few comments regarding the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act, or County Payments Act as it has been nicknamed.

As this session comes to an end, I want to express my disappointment that this Congress did not act to reauthorize County Payments and to publicly reaffirm my commitment to finding resolution for this issue.

In 2000, the Congress passed Public Law 106-393 to address the needs of the forest counties of America. It created a new cooperative partnership between citizens in forest counties and our Federal land management to develop forest health improvement projects on public lands and simultaneously stimulate job development and community economic stability.

The act has been an enormous success, not just achieving but surpassing the goals of Congress. This act has restored programs for students in rural areas and prevented the closure of numerous isolated schools. It has been a primary funding mechanism to provide rural school students with educational opportunities comparable to those enjoyed by suburban and urban students. More than 4,400 rural schools receive funds because of this act.

Next, the act has allowed rural county road districts and county road departments to address the severe maintenance backlog. Snow removal has been restored for citizens, tourists, and school buses. Bridges have been upgraded and replaced, and culverts that are hazardous to fish passage have been upgraded and replaced.

In addition, over 70 Resource Advisory Committees, or RACs, have been formed. These RACs cover our largest 150 forest counties. Nationally, these 15-person diverse RAC stakeholder committees have studied and approved more than 2,500 projects on Federal forestlands and adjacent public and private lands. These projects have addressed a wide variety of improvements drastically needed on our national forests. Projects have included fuels reduction, habitat improvement, watershed restoration, road maintenance and rehabilitation, reforestation, campground and trail improvement, and noxious weed eradication.

RACs are a new and powerful partnership between county governments and the land management agencies. They are rapidly building the capacity for collaborative public land management decisionmaking in over 150 of our largest forest counties in America and are reducing the gridlock over public land management, community by community.

The legacy of this act over the last few years is positive and substantial. This law should be extended so it can continue to benefit the forest counties, their schools, and continue to contribute to improving the health of our national forests.

I could go on and on about the merits of this act, but the truth is politics got in the way of funding any extension.

Some of my colleagues proposed to fund this measure through a sweeping new 3-percent withholding on all payments made by Federal, State, and local governments. This proposal would impose significant burdens on businesses. In most cases, businesses make substantially less than a 3-percent profit on their contracts and sometimes turn no profit at all. The withholding requirement will effectively withhold entire paychecks—interest free—thereby impeding the cash flow of small businesses, eliminating funds that can be used for reinvestment in the business, and forcing companies to pass on the added costs to customers or finance the additional amount. In addition, the cost to the Federal, State, and local governments to administer

and implement the new withholding requirement will be substantial. The Congressional Budget Office called the provision an unfunded mandate on State and local governments because its expected costs exceed the allowable \$50 million annual threshold. In short, this proposal would hurt many of the same people we are trying to help.

The administration also proposed a few ideas, one being the selling of public lands. I have always supported the exchange or sale of small parcels of public land that improve land management for wildlife habitat, recreation, and access. I oppose selling those public lands that are America's treasures such as national parks, wilderness lands, or national monuments. I also oppose selling public lands for the sole purpose of generating funds for the U.S. Treasury.

All of the ideas I brought to the working group encouraged responsible resource development and further promoted the relationship of our resource dependant communities and our public lands. I have encouraged the working group to look at expediting oil and gas leases, thus generating additional revenue through increased royalty payments. Next, I asked that the working group consider streamlining NEPA for salvage logging and other timber-related projects. My hope was to build on the success of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 and reunite our communities with our public lands.

Let me assure you that these ideas I have just described were only the tip of the iceberg. No stone was left unturned, and in many cases the rock was flipped several times in hopes of shaking a new idea loose. Unfortunately, none of the ideas could garner enough bipartisan support. Again, it is upsetting to me to see an issue that has built its reputation on nonpartisan success fall victim to partisan politics.

If we do not work to reauthorize this act, all of the progress of the last 6 years will be lost. Schools in timber-dependant communities will lose a substantial part of their funding. These school districts will have to start making tough budget decisions such as keeping or canceling afterschool programs, sports programs, music programs, and other programs that serve the basic educational needs of our children. In addition, many school districts will have to determine if and how many staff members they can retain for the next school year. Next, counties will have to reprioritize road maintenance so that only the essential services of the county are met because that is all they will be able to afford. Since most school districts and counties operate on a fiscal year that begins July 1, many of these critical decisions have to be made sooner rather than later.

I have always viewed that this act as a temporary measure to help communities transition from historical payments to the reality of today. Unfortunately, our communities have not come far enough in the last 6 short

years. I want to work with my colleagues to help counties expedite their transitions and feel that the first step is to address how much funding is associated with the reauthorization.

With the beginning of the next Congress, I will encourage my colleagues to recall why we are working on this reauthorization, the relationship between our public lands, schools, and counties. And I will be asking for their commitment in working in a bipartisan fashion to address this critical issue expeditiously.

#### RECOGNIZING THE DC COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I rise to reflect on the contributions that the DC Commission for Women has made to the lives of the disenfranchised in our Nation's Capital. Of particular note has been the commission's focus on homeless women and children who are often forgotten and neglected in the District of Columbia.

I am particularly pleased that the commission will serve as a partner in the "big read" program, sponsored by the national endowment for the arts. This program provides books for low-income "at-risk" children. The DC Commission for Women is also a national model for educating the public on domestic violence prevention and women's health and safety issues.

My remarks are coming on the eve of Mayor Anthony Williams' transition from public service into private life. It is befitting that the commission is paying tribute to Mayor Williams' mother, Virginia E. Hayes Williams, a member of the commission and a strong advocate for children and women. It is not coincidental that the tribute will be held at the Saint Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church for Mrs. Williams, like Constantine the Great's mother, Helen, advised her son on religion and affairs of the state.

I would also like to acknowledge the commission's chair, Dr. Christine M. Warnke, whose leadership has brought international resources and visibility to the commission. She has expanded the commission's programs and forged global partnerships which promote religious and cultural tolerance.

As we move into the 110th Congress, I look forward to working with the Commission for Women on these important issues.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

#### VOICE OF AMERICA

• Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, as the people of Serbia approach a critical national election on January 21, 2007, I pay tribute to the journalists and broadcasters who have worked to provide an antidote to forces of extremism in the country. I especially congratu-

late the Voice of America's Serbian Service and recognize the 10-year anniversary of its first television broadcast. VOA's long-running work in Serbia has played a valuable role in the country's evolution and provided an important source of information during the darkest periods of Serb history. This contribution has been particularly evident as Serbia has undergone profound changes in the last 10 years.

Open Studio, VOA's first daily television newscast, was launched on December 11, 1996, in the wake of massive demonstrations to protest the invalidation of election victories by opponents of Slobodan Milosevic. In the face of public outcry, the Milosevic regime worked quickly to silence independent media outlets in Serbia, including a small, vibrant radio station called B92. The student-run station had distinguished itself by broadcasting hard news about the wars in the former Yugoslavia and engaging in relentless criticism of the Government. VOA's Serbian Service responded to the Milosevic regime's attacks on media freedom by expanding its broadcast and providing extensive reports on the international reaction to the protests in Serbia. On the day Serb authorities finally shut down B92, VOA requested permission to help the station reach its audience via VOA radio waves. As a result, VOA Serbian launched a media solidarity project and began broadcasting reports prepared by B92 stringers. The solidarity project received widespread international attention, including press coverage by the New York Times, Washington Post, CNN, and many other respected media outlets.

After VOA began providing assistance to B92, the Milosevic Government relented and permitted the station's radio service to resume broadcasting. B92's chief editor, Veran Matic, credited VOA's assistance and international pressure on the Milosevic Government with getting his station back on the air. B92 quickly became a symbol of freedom and resistance to ultranationalism during the balance of the Milosevic era. Today, the station is one of the most respected radio and television broadcasters in Serbia.

VOA's Open Studio program has built on its early success and is now carried by 53 television stations in the region; 45 in Serbia and Montenegro, 6 in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and 1 each in Kosovo and Macedonia. VOA is the leading international broadcaster in Serbia and Montenegro today, reaching 16 percent of the country's population each week through its radio and television programming.

By presenting American values to an audience that was predominantly anti-American, the Voice of America Serbian Service has been an important public diplomacy tool and helped promote United States foreign policy objectives in Southeast Europe. In keeping with the best traditions of the service's 60-year history, VOA has helped

guide Serbs toward greater freedom and openness, and encouraged the country to come to terms with the difficult legacy of the Yugoslav wars. VOA's objective, comprehensive reporting and analysis has provided reliable, often indispensable information to the region's Serbian population.

Events in Serbia during the last decade provide compelling evidence of how courageous journalism can serve as a catalyst for democratic change. As the region prepares to deal with new challenges, including potential political changes in Belgrade and Kosovo, there is an ongoing need to provide Southeast Europe with reliable information. Along with the important work of B92 and other brave Serb partners, I applaud the efforts of the Voice of America to convey the facts and represent the United States to the people of Serbia. I look forward to the VOA's continued success in its next decade of service.●

#### WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about a bill that we have been trying to pass for several years now—the Water Resources Development Act. Yet, again, we were not able to pass this bill that is not only important for the State of Florida, but also for the country. It includes two particularly key projects for Everglades Restoration: Indian River Lagoon and Picayune Strand. Both of these projects are critical to "getting the water right" and restoring the natural environment of America's Everglades. As incoming Chair of the Senate Environment Committee, will it be a priority of the new Chair, Senator BOXER of California, to pass the WRDA as soon as possible in the 110th Congress?

Mrs. BOXER. Yes. I commit to my friend from Florida, Senator BILL NELSON, that as the new chair of the Environment Committee, WRDA will absolutely be a priority for the committee. I look forward to working with him on projects important to Florida and passing WRDA as a whole as soon as possible in the 110th Congress.

#### WORLD TRADE MONTH

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about World Trade Month. I have always been a free trader, and I am very proud of the many Oregon companies that are active in international trade and are pioneers in breaking into new markets and tearing down ancient barriers to commerce and cooperation. As advances in technology and transportation shrink our world, the international trade of goods and ideas becomes more and more vital to our economy.

In May 2006, the Commerce Department's Office of Export Assistance organized a very timely and useful program that focused on Asian markets