

cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here." This statement is just as true today as it was nearly 150 years ago, as I am certain that the impact of Will's actions will live on far longer than any record of these words.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Willard M. Powell in the official record of the United States Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy, and peace. When I think about this just cause in which we are engaged, and the unfortunate pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope that Will's family can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Will.

TRAGEDY IN GREECE

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I wish to take a moment to recognize the people of the Republic of Greece who have demonstrated great bravery in the midst of terrible tragedy this summer. More than 5 people have died in the fires ravaging Greece during the past month. The scope of these fires is shocking. The flames showed no mercy to the elderly, young children, or the treasures of antiquity. Our sympathy and condolences go out to the families of the dozens of people who have died as a result of this tragedy and to the many people driven from their homes by the disaster.

As in New Orleans after Katrina, or in the wake of any terrible disaster, emergency aid is critical, but focus on the long-term needs of the victims is essential. The Greek people have responded bravely to the crisis. I understand that the Government of the United States has provided assistance and is in the process of working with the Greek Government, Greek-American organizations, and the Greek Orthodox Church to determine what those needs are. I urge the administration to continue to demonstrate our commitment to our Greek allies in the wake of these horrific events. Our allies can and should rightly judge us by our concern and commitment for them in times of adversity. Greece has been there for us; America must be there for Greece.

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

SUSTAINED LEADERSHIP IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

• Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, as President Bush arrives in Sydney to take

part in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, APEC, leaders meeting, it is appropriate to take stock of America's role in the Asia-Pacific region.

America's future prosperity and security is directly tied to Asia. The region contains the world's fastest growing major economies, largest militaries, largest energy consumers and importers, and biggest contributors to global climate change. Some of the most critical items on our international agenda—such as ending North Korea's nuclear weapons program, developing ties to moderate Muslim states, building a sound global economy, achieving energy security, combating climate change, and responding to pandemic disease—are impossible to achieve without robust U.S. partnerships and sustained engagement in Asia.

But despite the region's obvious importance, we have lost ground over the past seven years. The war in Iraq that should never have been authorized or waged has been an enormous distraction from the fight against al-Qaida, which has reconstituted itself in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In addition to the enormous costs in lives and resources, the war has also set back our standing and leadership in the world, and made it far more difficult for America to lead on critical issues. In Asia, a region that both wants and expects United States' leadership, this inattention has led to a decline in U.S. prestige and influence and has placed our national security interests in jeopardy.

While America has been increasingly absent in Asia, China has promoted itself as an alternative to U.S. leadership. And with fundamental shifts in Asia's security and economy underway—a rising China, emerging India, a Japan seeking to become a more "normal" and assertive nation, and North Korea and South Korea presenting dangers and opportunities the United States cannot afford to stay on the sidelines.

U.S. engagement is vital to maintaining the balance, and therefore peace, among potentially competing powers. In particular, the rise of China requires a clear-sighted view of our interests. A policy that seeks cooperation with China on security, economic, energy and environmental issues, maintains our military strength in the western Pacific, and strengthens our ability to compete must be a foundation of any successful policy.

While APEC may be primarily an economic forum, it also offers the opportunity to engage all the region's leaders in a single setting—and to further our agenda across the range of key challenges. Too often, the U.S. has missed this opportunity.

North Korea's nuclear ambitions already have had a profound impact on the region, and we must work to achieve a complete and verifiable elimination of all the DPRK's nuclear weapons capabilities and programs. I welcome the recent statement that

North Korea will declare and disable its nuclear programs by the end of the year. For far too long, the administration's disdain for diplomacy allowed the threat from North Korea to grow. While clearly the best time to negotiate with North Korea would have been before it tested a nuclear weapon, we must now verify North Korean compliance with their commitments. This will demand principled, aggressive, direct and sustained American diplomacy and leadership in the region.

To build support against terrorists and prevail in the long-term battle against violent extremism, the U.S. must work closely with Asia, and Southeast Asia in particular, to develop effective strategies that both prevent acts of terrorism and root out al-Qaida elements. In addition to cooperative military, intelligence, and law enforcement efforts, this will require recognition that our relationships in the region are more complex and multidimensional than a narrow approach to counterterrorism. We should use the opportunity of the APEC forum to explore new initiatives to increase political, diplomatic, economic, educational, and cultural engagement.

In terms of our shared prosperity, nowhere is America's sustained leadership more important in ensuring that the global economy remains vibrant. Together the economies of the APEC region account for over half the world's output and trade. It is essential that Asian countries work with us to ensure balanced growth and openness of the global trading system. This means shifting away from their traditional dependence on export-led growth and weak currencies toward stronger consumption at home and greater absorption of imports. The United States should negotiate only "gold standard" agreements with our Asian trading partners that stimulate growth and jobs and contain binding labor and environmental standards and intellectual property protections.

With the nations of East Asia working together through ASEAN, the ASEAN Regional Forum, APEC, the East Asia Summit and other regional arrangements, Asia is moving ahead—with or without us—to create a new regional architecture. Our interests demand that we re-engage to ensure trans-Pacific linkages are relevant and strong. That means developing new arrangements to meet new and rising challenges and transnational threats that stem from globalization—especially in the areas of pandemic disease, climate change, and energy security. The latest pandemic, an unidentified, highly contagious virus affecting pigs, is sweeping Asia. We must ensure that China and other affected countries cooperate in research and containing this and future outbreaks of disease. We should use the opportunity of APEC to further the dialogue about the growing problem of pandemics.

On climate change and energy, the U.S. and Asia face many of the same