

each made great strides in consolidating their new democracies. They have reformed their defense establishments, worked to root out corruption, modernized their economies, and contributed to NATO security missions in the Balkans and Afghanistan. Responding to these efforts with NATO membership at the upcoming summit would add to the alliance military capabilities while contributing to stability in the Balkans, a region still suffering from the ethnic tensions left behind by the bloodshed of the 1990s.

Ukraine and Georgia have also been developing their ties with NATO. Their leaders have declared their readiness to advance a NATO Membership Action Plan, MAP, to prepare for the rights and obligations of membership. They are working to consolidate democratic reforms and to undertake new responsibilities in their relationship with the Alliance. I welcome the desire and actions of these countries to seek closer ties with NATO and hope that NATO responds favorably to their request, consistent with its criteria for membership. Whether Ukraine and Georgia ultimately join NATO will be a decision for the members of the alliance and the citizens of those countries, after a period of open and democratic debate. But they should receive our help and encouragement as they continue to develop ties to Atlantic and European institutions.

NATO enlargement is not directed against Russia. Russia has an important role to play in European and global affairs and should see NATO as a partner, not as a threat. But we should oppose any efforts by the Russian government to intimidate its neighbors or control their foreign policies. Russia cannot have a veto over which countries join the alliance. Since the end of the Cold War, Republican and Democratic administrations have supported the independence and sovereignty of all the states of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and we must continue to do so. President Putin recent threat to point missiles at Ukraine is simply not the way to promote the peaceful 21st century Europe we seek.

NATO stands as an example of how the United States can advance American national security—and the security of the world—through a strong alliance rooted in shared responsibility and shared values. NATO remains a vital asset in America's efforts to anchor democracy and stability in Europe and to defend our interests and values all over the world. The Bucharest summit provides an opportunity to advance these goals and to reinforce a vital alliance. NATO's leaders must seize that opportunity. ●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting nominations which were referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 2:27 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 2272. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service known as the Southpark Station in Alexandria, Louisiana, as the John "Marty" Thiels Southpark Station, in honor and memory of Thiels, a Louisiana postal worker who was killed in the line of duty on October 4, 2007.

S. 2478. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 59 Colby Corner in East Hampstead, New Hampshire, as the "Captain Jonathan D. Grassbaugh Post Office".

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 12. A bill to promote home ownership, manufacturing, and economic growth.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communication was laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and was referred as indicated:

EC-5298. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revenue Procedure: Safe Harbors for Sections 143 and 25" (Rev. Proc. 2008-17) received on February 25, 2008; to the Committee on Finance.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-286. A resolution adopted by the Council of the County of Hawaii supporting the National Health Insurance Act; to the Committee on Finance.

POM-287. A collection of petitions from citizens across the country relative to establishing a more equitable method of computing cost of living adjustments for Social Security benefits; to the Committee on Finance.

POM-288. A petition from citizens of the State of New York relative to the role of federal courts in prison reform; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

POM-289. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of Hawaii urging the creation of an agreement that results in an economy-wide reduction in greenhouse gas emissions; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 24

Whereas, the White House is convening a Major Economies Meeting on Energy Security and Climate Change with seventeen invited countries at the Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange Between East and West, Inc. (East-West Center) on the campus of the University of Hawaii at Manoa on January 30 and 31, 2008, to discuss potential international agreements on global climate change; and

Whereas, for more than half a century, researchers have used atmospheric samples taken at the Mauna Loa Observatory on the island of Hawaii to track a steady annual increase in the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and have concluded that concentrations are now higher than they have been in the past eight hundred thousand years; and

Whereas, scientific consensus links the anthropogenic increase in greenhouse gases to global climate change; and

Whereas, the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change indicates that global emissions of greenhouse gases need to peak in the next ten to fifteen years and be reduced to levels well below half those in 2000 by the middle of this century in order to stabilize greenhouse gases concentrations in the atmosphere at the lowest levels assessed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate change to date in its scenarios; and

Whereas, achieving the lowest levels assessed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to date and its corresponding potential damage limitation would require developed countries as a group to reduce emissions in a range of twenty-five to forty per cent below 1990 levels by 2020; and

Whereas, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the signatory nations of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change have recognized the special dangers of climate change to island states, territories, and nations; and

Whereas, global climate change is causing rapid melting of ice at both the north and south polar regions, which, in conjunction with thermal expansion due to warmer water temperatures, is leading to a rapid rise in sea level; and

Whereas, University of Hawaii experts have demonstrated that a one meter rise in sea level would inundate much of Hawaii's coastline, including the world renowned Waikiki resort area, the Honolulu International Airport's reef runway, the majority of Hawaii's wastewater treatment facilities, many historic sites, and many populated areas, including lands up to a mile away from the existing shoreline in parts of Honolulu; and

Whereas, global climate change also threatens Hawaii with stronger hurricanes, prolonged drought, shifting weather patterns, warmer temperatures, shifting microclimates, increased spread of invasive species, and saltwater intrusion into its aquifers; and

Whereas, increased atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations foster greater carbon dioxide uptake by the world's oceans, leading to ocean acidification and the resultant decreases in reef health and decreases in survival of ocean life that rely on calcium carbonate shells; and

Whereas, Hawaii is doing its part to reduce its contribution to global climate change by