

alike recognize that the United States needs to reinvigorate its engagement in the world, particularly through rebuilding alliances and using diplomacy more effectively. The omnibus puts our money where our mouths are. The alternative would have been to retract, and to invite others to fill the vacuum. That might save money in the short term, but it would have cost us dearly in the future.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am glad Republican Senators abandoned their efforts to filibuster the nomination of the Deputy Attorney General. It was only after the majority leader filed for cloture that the Republican caucus came to the conclusion that such a maneuver was futile. I thank the majority leader for scheduling the debate and votes for the President's nominees to serve as Deputy Attorney General and Associate Attorney General. They have now been confirmed by the Senate.

The Republican minority, nonetheless, insisted on 7 hours of debate on the Deputy Attorney General nomination this week before allowing the vote. That was longer than the debate they demanded on the nomination of the Attorney General of the United States. I spoke yesterday to open the debate, as did the ranking Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator SPECTER, who also supported the nomination. We both spoke, again, today to close the debate.

I followed the debate, and have responded by way of additional statements to correct the record on the Deputy Attorney General nominee.

Now I would like us to take a step back and see what has occurred. Yesterday, the Republican minority insisted on 5 hours of debate on the Ogden nomination. In fact, the Republican opposition devoted less than 1 hour to comment about the Ogden nomination. The rest of their time they consumed with criticism of the President's budget and policy initiatives to help the country recover from the economic crisis. I am not saying that the budget discussion is unimportant. I may not agree with their criticism, but the budget is certainly a topic about which Senators may wish to make statements. My point is that after delaying debate on the President's nomination for the No. 2 official at the Justice Department for 2 weeks, and demanding extended debate, they failed to use the time to discuss the nomination. Instead, they talked about unrelated issues.

In fact, they were so uninterested in debating the nomination that by the time Senator INHOFE came to the floor, all Republican time had been used on other discussions. As a courtesy, we made available time from the Democratic side that should have been used by supporters of the nomination. We accommodated the Senator from Oklahoma so that he could speak against the nomination.

Today, an additional 2 hours was demanded by the Republican majority to debate the Ogden nomination further before they would allow a vote. Of course, those Republicans who opposed the nomination used not 1 minute of time to debate it today—not 1 minute.

Indeed, of the time that the Republican minority insisted was necessary before the Senate could vote on the Ogden nomination, more than an hour was wasted in quorum calls with no speakers at all yesterday and approximately 1 hour was spent by opposition speakers—not 7 hours, not 3 hours, barely 1 hour. The Ogden debate could easily have been handled with the opposition taking an hour or an hour and one-half to speak.

I wish instead of this campaign to delay and obstruct the President, the minority would work with us on the consideration of matters of critical importance to the American people. I will note just one current example. This morning, the New York Times had a front-page story about financial frauds. Last week, the Senate Judiciary Committee reported an antifraud matter to the Senate. The Leahy-Grassley Fraud Enforcement and Recovery Act, S.386, needs to be considered without delay. It is an important initiative to confront the fraud that has contributed to the economic and financial crisis we face, and to protect against the diversion of the Federal efforts to recover from this downturn.

As the New York Times story demonstrates, improving our efforts to hold those accountable for the mortgage and financial frauds that have contributed to the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression is most timely. We need to do better, and our bipartisan bill, which has the support of the U.S. Department of Justice, can make a difference. In addition to Senator GRASSLEY, I thank Senator KAUFMAN, Senator KLOBUCHAR, Senator SCHUMER, and Senator SHELBY for working with us and for their interest in this important measure.

Our legislation is designed to reinvigorate our capacity to investigate and prosecute the kinds of frauds that have undermined our economy and hurt so many hard-working Americans. It provides the resources and tools needed for law enforcement to aggressively enforce and prosecute fraud in connection with bailout and recovery efforts. It authorizes \$245 million a year over the next couple of years for fraud prosecutors and investigators. With this funding, the FBI can double the number of mortgage fraud taskforces nationwide, and target the hardest hit areas. It includes resources for our U.S. Attorneys' Offices, as well as the Secret Service, the HUD Inspector General's Office and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. It includes important improvements to our fraud and money laundering statutes to strengthen prosecutors' ability to confront fraud in mortgage lending practices, to protect TARP funds, and to uncover fraudulent

schemes involving commodities futures, options and derivatives as well as making sure the Government can recover the ill-gotten proceeds from crime.

Our bipartisan measure was favorably reported on a voice vote by the Judiciary Committee on March 5. I have been trying to get a time agreement to consider the measure ever since. The Senate should consider and pass it without delay. We can help make a difference for all Americans. Instead of wasting our time in quorum calls when no one is speaking, or demanding multiple hours of debates on nominations that can be discussed in much less time before being confirmed, let us work on matters that will help get us out of the economic ditch that we have inherited from the policies of the last administration, and let us begin to work together on behalf of the American people.

EL SALVADOR ELECTION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this Sunday the people of El Salvador will go to the polls to elect a new President. As one Senator who has followed developments in that country and observed with concern the steady rise in violent crime, including organized crime and drug trafficking, I hope that whoever wins the election makes reforming the police and justice system a priority.

United States assistance to El Salvador is a small fraction of what it was during the 1980s, but in 2006 El Salvador signed a 5-year compact with the Millennium Challenge Corporation. The compact totals \$461 million, and focuses on road construction, economic and social development in the area of the country bordering Honduras that bore the brunt of the worst consequences of the civil war.

I had hoped that a portion of the MCC compact would be used to strengthen El Salvador's dysfunctional judicial system, both to help reduce violent crime and attract foreign investment, but unfortunately that was not the decision of the Salvadoran Government or the Bush administration at the time. Nevertheless, the MCC compact does seek to improve the lives of some of El Salvador's poorest communities and I support it.

Recently, I have been concerned with reports that some Salvadorans involved in the election campaign may have asserted that if the opposition party candidate wins the election the United States will stop funding the MCC compact. Such an assertion, presumably to intimidate voters, would be completely false.

We take no position on the Salvadoran election. It is entirely for the people of El Salvador to decide who their next President will be. The MCC compact will continue regardless of who wins on Sunday, as long as the policies of the new Government, of whichever party, are consistent with

the MCC's eligibility criteria, including controlling corruption and investing in health and education.

I look forward to the results of Sunday's election and the opportunity for our two countries to work together for a brighter future.

10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE EXPANSION OF NATO

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 10-year anniversary of the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO.

During the debate on whether to expand NATO, I said that this debate holds special resonance for me. Growing up as a Polish American in east Baltimore, I learned about the burning of Warsaw at the end of the Second World War. The Germans burned Warsaw to the ground—killing a quarter of a million people—as Soviet troops watched from the other side of the Vistula River. I learned about the Katyn massacre—where Russia murdered more than four thousand Polish military officers and intellectuals in the Katyn Forest at the start of the Second World War.

The tragedies that Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary experienced in the aftermath of the Second World War are etched on my heart. That was the one reason I fought so long and so hard for Poland and the others to be part of the western family of nations.

Despite the importance of history, my support for NATO enlargement was based on the future. My support was based on what is best for America. Thankfully when we voted to bring Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary into NATO, the yeas carried the day. Since that day, those three nations have exceeded every expectation as strong allies of the United States, and the naysayers' fears during the debate on the NATO expansion have also been shown as unwarranted.

The NATO expansion nations of 1999, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary have more than lived up to their obligations under the NATO alliance. Poland has made enormous investments into all areas of its military. As a result, over the last 10 years the number of Polish troops serving on NATO missions has steadily grown from 1500 to over 3500. Another 300 Polish military personnel serve in prestigious academic and administrative positions in NATO institutions around the world. Polish naval vessels also operate as part of NATO standing reaction forces all over the world, providing cutting edge mine detection and countermeasures expertise.

Poland has also emerged as one of the United States' strongest allies in the war against terrorism and extremism around the globe. Polish troops accompanied American soldiers into Iraq when they invaded in 2003, and maintained a mission that grew as large as 2500 troops up until the end of 2008. Nearly 30 Polish soldiers gave

their lives in Iraq. Poland also has one of the largest contingents in Afghanistan. Over 1600 Polish soldiers fight every day to stabilize the Afghan province of Ghazni. Nine Polish soldiers have been killed and dozens wounded in Iraq.

In closing, I wish to speak a bit about history. My colleagues have heard me speak about Poland's history many times in the past. For 40 years, I watched the people of Poland live under brutal, communist rule. They did not choose Communism—it was forced upon them. Each ethnic group in America brings our own history to our wonderful American mosaic. Bringing these three nations into NATO family of nations 10 years ago was one of the best decisions we made in the post-cold war era. Of all the things I have done in my years in the Senate, this is one of those for which I am most proud.

LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I wish to express my grave concern at the continuing massacres, kidnappings, and terror orchestrated by the Lord's Resistance Army, the LRA, in northeastern Congo and southern Sudan. As many of my colleagues know, I have long been engaged in efforts to bring an end to this—one of Africa's longest running and most gruesome rebel wars. In 2004, I authored and Congress passed the Northern Uganda Crisis Response Act, which committed the United States to work vigorously for a lasting resolution to this conflict. In 2007, I visited displacement camps in northern Uganda and saw first-hand the impact the violence orchestrated by the LRA has had throughout the region. I have been frustrated as the LRA has been able to move in recent years across porous regional borders to gain new footholds in northeastern Congo, southern Sudan, and even the Central African Republic, with little consequence.

Just over 2 months ago, the Ugandan, Congolese, and South Sudanese militaries launched a joint offensive against the LRA's primary bases in northeastern Congo. Serious concerns have been raised about the planning and implementation of this operation. Since the military strike began, the LRA has been able to carry out a series of new massacres in Congo and Sudan, leaving over 900 people dead. That is a killing rate that, according to the Genocide Intervention Network, exceeds that in Darfur or even in Somalia. Hundreds of new children have been abducted and new communities have been devastated and displaced. It is tragically clear that insufficient attention and resources were devoted to ensuring the protection of civilians during the operation. Meanwhile, the LRA's leader, Joseph Kony, and his commanders escaped the initial aerial assault and have continued to evade the militaries. Thus far, this operation has resulted in the worst-case scenario: it has failed to stop the LRA, while

spurring the rebels to intensify their attacks against civilians.

I am not ruling out that this offensive—still ongoing—may yet succeed. Indeed, I strongly hope it does. On several occasions last year, Kony refused to sign a comprehensive peace agreement with the Government of Uganda, an agreement that even included provisions to shield him from an International Criminal Court indictment. At the same time, as negotiations were still underway, his forces launched new attacks in Congo, Sudan, and, for the first time, Central African Republic. They abducted hundreds of youths to rebuild their ranks. It was apparent that Kony was not interested in a negotiated settlement, despite the good efforts of mediators and northern Ugandan civil society leaders. I supported those peace negotiations, but it became increasingly clear that the LRA's leaders would only be stopped when forced to do so.

For many years I have pressed for a political solution to the crisis in northern Uganda. I pressed for the international community to work collectively to support efforts to bring peace and stability to this war-torn area. And against all odds, the most recent peace talks in Juba, South Sudan, did see a collective effort but to no avail. These negotiations were not perfect but for some time offered a path forward and provided a framework to address the underlying grievances of communities in northern Uganda. But then, it became increasingly clear that Joseph Kony had no intention of ever signing the final agreement and had instead been conducting new abductions to replenish his rebel group. It became increasingly clear that Kony and his top commanders would stand in the way of any comprehensive political solution.

These failed talks justify military action against the LRA's top command, but that action must be carefully considered. As we have seen too many times, offensive operations that are poorly designed and poorly carried out risk doing more harm than good, inflaming a situation rather than resolving it. Before launching any operation against the rebels, the regional militaries should have ensured that their plan had a high probability of success, anticipated contingencies, and made precautions to minimize dangers to civilians. It is widely known that when facing military offensive in the past, the LRA have quickly dispersed and committed retaliatory attacks against civilians. Furthermore, to be sustainable, military action needs to be placed within a larger counterinsurgency strategy that integrates outreach to local populations, active programs for basic service provision and reconstruction in affected areas, and mechanisms for ex-combatant disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Those mechanisms are especially important in the case of the LRA because of the large number of child abductees who make up the rebel ranks.