June 3, 2009

Congressional Record—Senate

S6027

At first I thought she might not have understood my Chinese, but it soon became clear that “June 4” meant nothing to her. I probably shouldn’t have been surprised.

In the week following the massacre, Chinese troops opened fire on unarmed civilians near Tiananmen Square. Chinese censors have managed to erase all mention of June 4 from the country’s textbooks and state-run media.

But for me, Tiananmen is impossible to forget. As Beijing bureau chief for The Post, I covered the silent demonstrations that began in mid-April, tried to track a murky power struggle among top Chinese leaders and managed a small team of young, Chinese-speaking reporters.

What I remember best was the sudden openness of many Beijing citizens of all professions. They were inspired by the students calling for political reform, media freedom and an end to “official profiteering.”

People believed in Communist Party supporters were suddenly telling me what they really thought. Some who had been silent in the past even debated politics on street corners. Journalists from all the leading Chinese newspapers, including the People’s Daily, the mouthpiece of the Communist Party, joined in. Their slogan was “Don’t forget Tiananmen.”

For a brief period, Chinese journalists were allowed to report objectively on the student protests. But this press freedom was short-lived and ended May 20 with the imposition of martial law and the entry of the People’s Liberation Army into Beijing.

At first, Beijing residents manned makeshift barriers and launched creativity. But late on the evening of June 3, tanks, armored personnel carriers and soldiers firing automatic weapons broke through to the square. The death toll quickly became a taboo subject for Chinese media.

Chinese doctors and nurses who had openly sided with students on the square, and who had allowed reporters into operating rooms to view the wounded, came under pressure to conceal casualty figures.

One brave hospital not far from Tiananmen Square led me and a colleague to a makeshift morgue, where we saw some 20 bullet-riddled bodies laid out on a cement floor. I later learned the doctor was “disciplined” for allowing us to view that scene.

A Chinese journalist considered a friend tried to convince me that government estimates of fewer than 300 killed were correct and that these included a large number of military and police casualties. I later learned from others that this journalist was working for state security.

After comparing notes with others, my guess was that the actual death toll was at least 700, and that those killed were ordinary Beijing residents.

It’s almost incredible that the Chinese government has succeeded for so long in covering up a tragedy of this magnitude.

But for those who closely monitor the continuing repression of civil liberties in China— and the government’s stranglehold on news deemed “sensitive”—it’s not surprising.

Chinese authorities continue to intimidate reporters, block Web sites and jam broadcast signals. China is the world’s leading jailer of journalists and cyber-dissidents. Chinese youths are among the most Web-savvy in the world. But Chinese news is censored, chat and blog applications, as well as Internet service providers, are equipped with filters that block out certain keywords incorporated in a blacklist that is continually updated.

China’s censorship is multipronged, sometimes heavy-handed and sometimes sophisticated.

Lines that cannot be crossed shift from time to time, leaving citizens uncertain and therefore prone to self-censorship. The blogging service will usually err on the side of caution rather than lose its license because of a debate about June 4.

Repression of bloggers who were students in Beijing on June 4. Many of them saw more than I did. And they are here to remind me—and many Chinese—of a history we should never forget.

Additional Statements

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I congratulate Milliani High School senior Lucia Mocz for winning the third place Addiction Science Award at this year’s Intel International Science and Engineering Fair, ISEF. With over 1,500 students participating from more than 50 countries, the Intel ISEF is the world’s largest science competition for high school students. The awards were presented by the National Institute on Drug Abuse—NIDA—at a ceremony on May 14, 2009.

I wish to acknowledge Lucia’s technical skill, innovation, and creativity in creating her winning project. Lucia’s computer science project, “Complex Evaluation of Danger and Tranquility in Urban Settings: An Immunocomputing Intelligence Approach,” used an artificial intelligence algorithm to generate highly detailed maps correlating indicators of danger and tranquility in the urban region of her hometown. While there are medical and behavioral science awards given by various public and private agencies, this is the first series of awards given exclusively for projects that advance addiction science.

However, this young woman could not have achieved what she has done without the additional support and knowledge of science and social issues provided by her teachers. I commend the teachers at Milliani High School, who played a role in Lucia’s success. Their dedication to instructing, nourishing and inspiring the next generation of professionals is exemplary. Her family is recognized as well for their commitment, sacrifice, and support that all helped to encourage and instill the important values that led to her award.

I would also like to note NIDA Director Dr. Nora D. Volkow’s comments that “our judges recognized a provocative strategy that could one day help...
us better understand how the built environment relates to patterns of drug abuse . . . This approach nicely mirrors the multidimensionality of the many factors known to influence the risk and consequences of drug abuse in our communities.

I encourage Lucia to continue to study and follow her passions for applied science and social issues. I wish nothing but the best for the her and her family and wish her continued success as she faces the challenges of college and beyond.

COMMENDING DR. NANCY ZIMPHER

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, today I honor the accomplishments of Dr. Nancy Zimpher, president of the University of Cincinnati. For the last 5 years, Dr. Zimpher has served the university as well as the Cincinnati community, and she will soon leave to become the chancellor of the State University of New York.

An Ohio native, President Zimpher earned her credentials at the Ohio State University and has devoted her professional life to improving higher education for America’s young people. In 2003, she became the 25th president, and the first woman to lead the University of Cincinnati. Shortly after her arrival, UC embarked on a comprehensive strategic plan to transform the University of Cincinnati into one of the nation’s top research universities. Dr. Zimpher’s work resulted in a significant increase in the graduation rate along with nearly a 10-percent increase in university enrollment.

During her tenure at UC, President Zimpher has been highly engaged on the national and regional level regarding education policy. As chair of the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities, Dr. Zimpher was heavily involved in issues surrounding the authorization of the Higher Education Act and was a strong advocate for issues facing urban research universities.

I have had the opportunity to work closely with Dr. Zimpher on issues relating to workforce development. Dr. Zimpher served on the host committee of our inaugural Ohio College Presidents’ Conference, where she was instrumental in forming partnerships between universities and employers. One of Dr. Zimpher’s greatest achievements at the University of Cincinnati was the Cincinnati-northern Kentucky collaborative focused on college access and success. This partnership involves higher education institutions in the Cincinnati region, urban P-12 school districts, and the University of Cincinnati, as well as business, civic, and nonprofit organizations. As President Obama has recognized through the creation of the Promise Neighborhoods initiative, these types of partnerships are essential to the health of urban communities like Cincinnati.

The State of Ohio, the city of Cincinnati, and the university are grateful to President Zimpher for her service. I am confident the university will continue to grow and increase in national stature because of her hard work and leadership. I wish her the best as she exercises her talents and abilities as she continues her career.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the President’s Office had already received the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(Messages printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 4:06 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills and joint resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 325. An act to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the Avra Black Wash Reclamation and Riparian Restoration Project.

H.R. 699. An act to interexchange the administrative jurisdiction of certain Federal lands between the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1290. An act to amend the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 to require child care providers to provide to parents information regarding whether such providers carry current liability insurance; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

H.R. 1380. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to continue stocking fish in certain lakes in the National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area, and Lake Chelan National Recreation Area; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 2330. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to continue stocking fish in certain lakes in the National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area, and Lake Chelan National Recreation Area; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 1380. An act to establish a grant program for automated external defibrillators in elementary and secondary schools; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

H.R. 2330. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing Camp Hale as a unit of the National Park System; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 2430. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to continue stocking fish in certain lakes in the National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area, and Lake Chelan National Recreation Area; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following bill was discharged from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

S. 1144. A bill to improve transit services; including in rural States; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers and documents, and were referred as indicated: EC-1754. A communication from the Chief of Publications and Regulations, Internal...