

TRIBUTE TO SECRETARY OF
STATE HILLARY CLINTON

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, on what is her final day as Secretary of State, I would like to express my admiration and gratitude to Hillary Rodham Clinton for the extraordinary job she has done over the last 4 years. I agree wholeheartedly with President Obama who said she has been one of the finest Secretaries of State in our Nation's history.

When she took on this responsibility in January 2009, Hillary Clinton was already one of the most celebrated and accomplished women in the world. Certainly her reputation and renown have been tremendous assets as she worked to restore America's standing in the world.

Over the last 4 years, Hillary Clinton has been the ultimate workhorse public servant as opposed to the showhorse. This comes as no surprise to me and other former colleagues in the Senate. We know she is a leader of extraordinary substance and a talent with an amazing work ethic.

Secretary of State Clinton has set records as the most traveled Secretary for time in office, visiting some 42 countries just in the last year alone. She will be remembered for her tireless efforts to promote the empowerment of women worldwide and for her many demonstrations that "smart power" and assertive diplomacy can be far more effective than so-called "hard power" and military interventions.

I am especially grateful to Secretary of State Clinton for insisting on robust assistance to Haiti in the wake of the devastating earthquake of 2010. In addition, following my visit to Vietnam in 2010, and just prior to her own visit, we talked and I had urged her to pledge America's commitment to helping Vietnam clean up the sites contaminated by Agent Orange. She agreed wholeheartedly, and this is one way she has been very successful in repairing the breach with our former adversary and doing what is right and just for the victims of Agent Orange in Vietnam.

I have many fond memories of Hillary Clinton's 8 years here in the Senate. During that entire tenure, we served together on the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. In that role, as in her previous role as First Lady, she was an outspoken advocate for health care reform, fighting tirelessly to secure quality affordable health care for all Americans. Although she was no longer in the Senate when the Affordable Care Act passed and was signed into law, she shares enormous credit for laying the groundwork of that historic achievement.

Hillary Clinton has been a wonderful friend to my wife Ruth and to me, and, of course, from her many campaigns in my State, she has so many friends all across the State of Iowa. So she is retiring from the Department of State, but we all know that by no means is

she a retiring person. There are many vivid chapters yet to be written in the story of Hillary Rodham Clinton. I wish her a richly deserved rest and much success and happiness in the years ahead.

CONGRATULATING JOHN KERRY

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, as we say goodbye to Secretary Clinton in her capacity as Secretary of State, we say welcome aboard and congratulations to my good friend Senator JOHN KERRY on the resounding confirmation of his nomination to serve as our next Secretary of State. His departure will be a tremendous loss to the Senate, but I respect President Obama's decision to tap him for this absolutely critical position. There is no one in the United States better qualified by experience, knowledge, and temperament to step into this extraordinarily demanding job.

To repeat what my colleagues already know, but it always bears repeating, after volunteering to serve in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam war, JOHN KERRY was awarded the Silver Star, a Bronze Star, and three Purple Hearts. Upon returning home, he became a national leader in the fight for justice for veterans who served beside him in Vietnam as well as for veterans of wars before and since Vietnam. He joined with others to found the Vietnam Veterans of America organization. He has worked hard here in the Senate over all of these years to secure veterans' benefits, for an extension of the GI bill for higher education, and for appropriate treatment for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder.

As we all know, Senator KERRY has played a leading role in shaping American foreign policy for many years in his position on the Foreign Relations Committee and as chair of that distinguished committee. As chair of that committee, he was instrumental in securing passage of the New START treaty, a vital arms accord with Russia that is helping to reduce the danger of nuclear proliferation. He has served as a trusted special envoy to Afghanistan, Sudan, and Pakistan at crucial moments. Senator KERRY advocated for democratic elections in the Philippines. He was part of a delegation that uncovered the fraud that ultimately led to the removal of President Ferdinand Marcos. He was a strong proponent of U.S. action to end ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and to oppose sanctions on Burma tied to human rights abuses. Senator KERRY has been a leader in promoting economic development and recovery in Haiti, fighting global HIV/AIDS, supporting democracy and human dignity, poverty assistance, and the advancement of women's empowerment throughout the world.

In his early days in the Senate, Senator KERRY and I—in fact, we were elected together in 1984; we came to the Senate together. But shortly after

that, Senator KERRY and I went on a factfinding mission to Nicaragua and unearthed information regarding the activities of the Contra guerillas, which he presented to the Committee on Foreign Relations. Based in part on his groundbreaking findings, the committee launched an investigation into the funding of the Contra guerillas that ultimately uncovered the Reagan administration's Iran-Contra scandal, a scheme to divert profits from illegal arms sales to Iran to support the Contra guerillas.

Senator KERRY and I, as I said, were both Members of the class of 1984 here in the Senate. We worked together to end illegal support of the Contras in Nicaragua, and we have collaborated on a range of human rights issues since then.

In particular, I salute his tireless and valiant attempt last year to pass the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. I can't tell my colleagues how hard he worked to get it through the committee and before that worked with others to make sure we had a good convention to the U.N. that mirrored our own Americans With Disabilities Act. JOHN KERRY worked tirelessly on this, and I am deeply grateful for all that work and the passionate commitment he made to this treaty. I know he shares my disappointment that the Senate failed to give its consent to this treaty, but I look forward to working with him in his new role as Secretary of State and with Senator MENENDEZ, our new chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, not only to promote the convention around the world, which I know Senator KERRY will do in his position as Secretary of State, but to once again bring this convention to the floor of the Senate and this time to prevail and pass it.

There is no question in my mind that JOHN KERRY will be a great Secretary of State. I wish him and Teresa the very best, and I look forward to working with him in the years ahead.

Madam President, I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NO BUDGET, NO PAY ACT

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, last week the House of Representatives passed a plan to prevent the risk of another credit rating downgrade. By ensuring that the United States will not default on its obligations, the House made the responsible decision to stop playing politics—at least for a while—with our Nation's creditworthiness and to prevent self-inflicted harm on our economy. Despite this effort, the House couldn't pass up the opportunity to