

and, by American law, the termination of Fidel Castro's rule. But the limited changes in this regard are owed less to official American isolation than to such regulated openings as the permissions for calls, emigration, humanitarian gifts and family trips and the historic visit of Pope John Paul II.

The American debate on Cuba has come to be an intense unproductive contest between the Miami exile right and its liberal critics. The Warner proposal promises to widen both the terms of the debate and the constituencies participating in it. A broad bipartisan review of Cuba policy is an idea whose time has come.

KOSOVO

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I have repeatedly taken the floor to speak about my great concern regarding the people who are suffering today in Kosovo. As I stated in my remarks on previous days, I visited Kosovo some weeks ago in the company of the KDOM—which is a most unusual organization—but it has the permission by which to take unarmed missions into the countryside around Pristina and elsewhere, to see the ravages of that tragic conflict.

Regrettably, even though we have now in place an agreement with Milosevic, the fighting and the strife continues. We have recently executed an agreement. I say "we." Primarily, the United Nations and NATO have entered into an agreement with the Yugoslav Government, and President Milosevic signed it.

There have been some changes in the status of forces of the Yugoslav Army and the like, but it is a very fluid situation. We hear one day units are moving out and then today there are reports that other Yugoslav Army units are being redeployed. The suffering, however, continues and the winter is coming. The whole world is standing by to witness what is, I think, one of the greatest recent tragedies.

Weather is as cruel as weapons. I saw, for my own eyes, these people huddled in the hills, helpless, homeless, without food, without medicine; tens of thousands—we do not know with any specific accuracy how many there are, but it certainly is in excess of 100,000 human beings—innocent victims, by and large, of the conflicts, political and military, in this region of Kosovo.

I have had the opportunity to get briefed by the Central Intelligence Agency, briefed by the Department of Defense; I try to remain as current as I can on this issue. The bottom line of what I am saying today is it is time that we look with great seriousness at the need to constitute a force which will have sufficient arms to go into that region and provide the stability necessary—I repeat, the stability necessary for the nongovernmental institutions and others to bring in the food, the medicine and the shelter that is required to support these people. It is as simple as that. They will simply perish by the tens of thousands without this sort of help.

The agreement provides for the OSCE to come in. This is the first time in the history of that organization that they have ever undertaken a challenge of this magnitude. They are not organized, really, to work to provide security which requires force of arms, but some attempt will be made along that line. The bottom line, I think, is someone has to stand up—and I am prepared to do it—and say that NATO is the only force constituted that can come in, in a short period of days, literally days, to give that degree of stability so these emergency supplies can come in. It is my grave concern that unless that is done and done promptly, the world will witness human suffering of a magnitude we have not seen, certainly, in a long time. I think only NATO can step in to do this.

I know the deep concern here in the Senate and elsewhere in the United States about employing any U.S. ground troops in the region of Kosovo. We went through those debates with regard to Bosnia. I personally was never in favor of it. But once we make a decision, as we have now made, and we have the agreements in place, there is absolutely no alternative but to faithfully try and execute our responsibility, together with NATO and the United Nations, to provide the environment in which, in the few weeks to come, we can save the lives of tens of thousands of innocent people. That can only be done by putting in place uniformed, organized, well-trained troops. Their presence could well be the deterrent to stop the fighting.

In my judgment, there are no clean hands in this situation. The preponderance of the atrocities obviously have been committed by the Serbian forces under the direction, either indirectly or directly, of Slobodan Milosevic. There is no doubt about that. But there also are some attacks being perpetrated by the KLA, which is that disparate group, relatively undefined, whose leadership changes from time to time, whose organization has very little coordination between the various bands of the KLA, but nevertheless they have perpetrated atrocities and, apparently, there are reports that some atrocities are continuing to be perpetrated by the KLA.

Only an absolutely neutral independence force, as constituted by the United Nations, together with NATO, can provide the security necessary to bring in the needed food and medicine.

In looking over the agreement, and in consultation with the Department of Defense, I have learned of one very interesting development. I have not, as yet, seen it in the open press, but I have obtained the authority of the Department of Defense to mention this, because I think it is a positive goal. There are certain positive goals that have been achieved by this agreement. This one will be severely criticized. I certainly have some criticism of it. But there are some positive results of the agreement that have recently been exe-

cuted between the United Nations, NATO and the Yugoslav Government.

One of them, for example, is as follows:

Under the agreement, Milosevic has been required to accept a continuing presence of NATO reconnaissance aircraft over his sovereign airspace in order to monitor its compliance with the terms of the accord.

Under that, we have today—and this is most important—six NATO military officers in Belgrade inside the Serbian air defense headquarters to act as liaison with NATO. We expect Yugoslav air defense personnel to report to the Combined Air Operation Center in Italy today to perform the same function.

That eliminates a lot of uncertainty that could spark a response by the Yugoslav air defense operations against our monitoring aircraft, and that must be avoided.

We expect this military-to-military coordination to eliminate any possibility of miscommunication on the implementation of the air verification regime.

I wish to say I find that to be a very positive part of this agreement. I just hope we will come to the realization that a second very positive step must be taken immediately, and that is placing security forces—and I think only NATO is able to do this within the few days that is required for those forces—to enable the food and medicine to reach those in need.

Unquestionably, Milosevic bears the primary responsibility for finding an acceptable political solution that grants the people of Kosovo some degree of autonomy. We know not that level at this time. A degree of self-governance has to come about and, most importantly, freedom from the oppression we have witnessed in the past months and, indeed, throughout the past decade when Milosevic removed from Kosovo its degree of autonomy and self-governance that it had some years ago.

Also, the ethnic Albanians bear responsibility for making this agreement a success as well. That primarily falls on the KLA. The political leadership of Kosovo and the Kosovo Liberation Army, or the UCK, as it is called, must refrain from violence and set up some establishment where they can have representatives at the negotiating table and negotiate in good faith and support the OSCE verification regime on the ground.

Mr. President, I will continue to monitor this. Of course, I will not have an opportunity to do so here on the floor of the Senate, but I will by other means, because I personally am gravely concerned about the plight of these homeless, helpless people who only ask for the opportunity to live in peace and quiet in their countryside and in their small homes, which I have seen in great numbers, but regrettably most that I saw had been blown up and devastated.

My prayers, and I think the prayers of the people of this country, are with

those helpless people. I hope we come to the quick realization of the steps that must be taken to resolve this tragic conflict.

I yield the floor.

TRIBUTE TO WORKING WOMEN

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the Greenwood Business and Professional Club of Greenwood, Mississippi, and the working women who comprise its membership. The club was established on November 20, 1931, and will be holding its annual Women of Achievement Banquet on Thursday, October 22, 1998. It is my privilege to note that my daughter, Tyler Lott, a working woman in her own right, will provide the banquet's keynote address.

For nearly 67 years, the Greenwood Business and Professional Club has been a shining example of women helping women through countless programs and projects. More importantly, the members of this club are representative of working women across America who make invaluable sacrifices every day to strengthen the economy and fiber of our families, communities, states and nation.

Working women are found in virtually every profession, trade and vocation, and constitute well over 62 million members of the United States workforce. In fact, women-owned businesses account for approximately one-third of domestic firms and employ over 13 million people. Moreover, we should always remember that, in addition to women working in traditional businesses, women may be found working in homes throughout America making significant contributions each day through their occupation as homemakers.

As working women continue their service to America through professional, civic and cultural endeavors, it is fitting that we recognize their growing numbers, and congratulate these women who labor so tirelessly and effectively both inside and outside the home. Whether in business, industry, a profession, or as a homemaker, today's working women are vital role models for young women coast-to-coast who will help mold the future of this country.

I am honored to have this opportunity to commend our nation's working women, and to extend my most sincere thanks to the members of the Greenwood Business and Professional Club for its 67 years of achievement and service.

PASSAGE OF THE GOVERNMENT PAPERWORK ELIMINATION ACT

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, the Omnibus Appropriations bill that the Senate is about to consider contains the full text of S. 2107, the Government Paperwork Elimination Act, a bill I introduced in April along with Senators WYDEN, MCCAIN and REED. I want to

thank Senators MCCAIN, LOTT, WYDEN, and HOLLINGS for taking the time and effort to work with me in advancing this legislation. Without their active support and participation, this bill would not have progressed as far as it has.

Senators WYDEN, MCCAIN and REED joined me in introducing the Government Paperwork Elimination Act in May of this year. On July 15, 1998, I chaired a hearing on this legislation before the full Commerce Committee. Two weeks later, S. 2107 was marked up in the Committee with several modifications. On a voice vote, the bill as amended was ordered to be reported.

When the Senate returned to session after the August recess, a unanimous consent agreement was propounded on S. 2107. This unanimous consent request brought the bill to the attention of Senator THOMPSON, the Chairman of the Government Affairs Committee. Senator THOMPSON had concerns with the bill because of the extent to which it dealt with Federal agencies.

Despite the time constraints—the session was expected to end in two weeks—Senator THOMPSON generously offered to work with me to address some of his committee's concerns and ensure that the bill as offered did not conflict with current mandates on the Executive. Over the course of the last week in September, Senator THOMPSON and I modified S. 2107 to address the concerns raised in his committee. On Tuesday, October 7, S. 2107 as amended was added as an amendment to S. 442 by unanimous consent.

The Internet Tax Freedom Bill passed the Senate on October 8 and was sent to the House for consideration. However, because the House did not agree with some of the language contained in the bill, House Members proposed adding the text of the House passed Internet Tax Freedom Bill to the omnibus rather than passing S. 442 as amended.

On October 15th, the Senate passed S. 2107 independent of other vehicles. On the same day, the text of S. 2107 was included in the omnibus appropriations bill. The next day, October 16th, the Omnibus Appropriations bill was passed by Congress with the text of the Government Paperwork Elimination Act included therein.

This legislation amends the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 to allow for the use of electronic submission of Federal forms to the Federal government with the use of an electronic signature within five years from the date of enactment. It is intended to bring the federal government into the electronic age, in the process saving American individuals and companies millions of dollars and hundreds of hours currently wasted on government paperwork.

In order to protect the private sector and ensure a level playing field for companies competing in the development of electronic signature technologies, this legislation mandates

that regulations promulgated by the Office of Management and Budget and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration be compatible with standards and technologies used commercially in order to ensure that no one industry or technology receives favorable consideration. It also requires Federal agencies to accept multiple methods of electronic submission if the agency expects to receive 50,000 or more electronic submissions of a particular form. This requirement will ensure that no single electronic signature technology is permitted to unfairly dominate the market.

This legislation also takes several steps to help the public feel more secure in the use of electronic signatures. If the public is going to send money or share private information with the government, people must be secure in the knowledge that their information and finances are adequately protected. For this reason, my bill requires that electronic signatures be as reliable as necessary for the transaction. If a person is requesting information of a public nature, a secure electronic signature will not be necessary. If, however, an individual is submitting forms which contain personal, medical or financial information, adequate security is imperative and will be available.

This is not the only provision providing for personal security, however. Senator LEAHY joined me to help establish a threshold for privacy protection in this bill. The language developed by Senator LEAHY and I will ensure that information submitted by an individual can only be used to facilitate the electronic transfer of information or with the prior consent of the individual. Also included is legislation which establishes legal standing for electronically submitted documents. Such legal authority is necessary to attach the same importance to electronically signed documents as is attached to physically signed documents. Without it, electronic submission of sensitive documents would be impossible. Finally, the Government Paperwork Elimination Act requires that Federal agencies to send an individual an electronic acknowledgement of their submission when it is received. Such acknowledgements are standard when conducting commerce online. A similar acknowledgement by Federal agencies will provide piece-of-mind for individuals who conduct business with the government electronically.

As much as individuals will benefit from this bill, so too will American businesses. By providing companies with the option of electronic filing and storage, this bill will reduce the paperwork burden imposed by government on commerce and the American economy. It will allow businesses to move from printed forms they must fill out using typewriters or handwriting to digitally-based forms that can be filled out using a word processor. The savings in time, storage and postage will