

Mr. President, the Congress worked long and hard in a bipartisan fashion to give Amtrak one more opportunity to do what they keep telling us they can do given the chance. The President let Amtrak, Congress, and the taxpayers think Amtrak was being given that chance. Sadly, the Administrations subsequent lack of interest is quickly taking that chance away.

SENATOR BYRD RECEIVES CONGRESSIONAL AWARD'S LEADERSHIP AWARD

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, last night, Senator ROBERT C. BYRD was awarded the Congressional Award Program's highest honor, the Leadership Award. This award is given to someone who has exhibited extraordinary leadership in support of programs which benefit our Nation's youth and the Congressional Award Program. We all know Senator BYRD as a skilled legislator, master of the Senate's rules and procedures, award-winning historian of the United States Senate, a man of great honor and personal integrity, a fine example of true leadership, a colleague, and a friend. We may not be fully aware of his tireless efforts on behalf of the children of this country. The Leadership Award is presented each year to individuals who have displayed outstanding commitment to improving the lives of young Americans and who have provided critical support to the Congressional Award program in its efforts to make the Award a national opportunity for all of our young people.

Senator BYRD knows only too well the hardships many of our children face: plagued by poverty, challenged by a culture which all too often fails to glorify the values essential to a civil society, facing violence not present when we grew up, a world without the kinds of heroes that inspired Senator BYRD to personal achievement and a life of service to others. As he so clearly articulated last night at the Congressional Award's annual dinner and program, heroes fuel in us a desire for personal development. And Senator BYRD found out that he is a hero to many.

Grant Hill, NBA basketball star, talked of the great honor of competing against Michael Jordan, and the equally great honor of meeting Senator BYRD, "the Michael Jordan of the Senate." Mr. Hill was awarded the Horizon Award, which gives special recognition to individuals from the private sector who have contributed to expanding opportunities for young Americans through personal contributions to youth programs, and who have set exceptional examples for young people through their success in life.

Congress grants only two medals: The Congressional Medal of Honor and the Congressional Award. The Congressional Award was established by Congress through P.L. 96-114. Senator BYRD was a member of the first Congressional Award Joint Leadership Commission and helped set the stand-

ards for this bipartisan program which is available to young people aged 14-23. To earn an award, participants must set and achieve individually challenging goals in volunteer community service, personal development, physical fitness and expeditions.

Please join me in extending our congratulations to Senator BYRD for being the 1998 recipient of the Congressional Award's Leadership Award, and for receiving yet again another first: being named the "Michael Jordan of the Senate."

TRIBUTE TO SPEARFISH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE 1998 "WE THE PEOPLE . . ." COMPETITION

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I want to commend an outstanding group of students from South Dakota who have participated in the We the People . . . The Citizen and The Constitution program across our state this year. The We the People . . . program is an annual nationwide competition sponsored by the Center for Civic Education.

The We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution program is the most extensive educational program in the country developed specifically to educate young people about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The We the People . . . program has provided curricular materials at upper elementary, middle and high school levels for more than 75,000 teachers and 24 million students nationwide. This program is designed to help students achieve a reasoned commitment to the fundamental values and principles that bind Americans together as a people. The program also fosters civic dispositions on traits of public and private character conducive to effective and responsible participation in politics and government.

Students from Marion High School, Harding County High School, Hot Springs High School, Rutland High School, and Spearfish High School showed a tremendous amount of talent and exhibited a great deal of diligent study in a state competition last month in Pierre, South Dakota. Students participated in simulated congressional hearings as the culminating state activity for the We the People . . . program. Each class, working in cooperative teams, prepared and presented statements before a panel of subject experts who acted as congressional committee members and posed challenging questions about the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and our democratic system. The format provided students an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of constitutional principles and their understanding of civic responsibility.

These teams had the support and guidance of their teacher and local advisors, which is essential in such a challenging competition. Curt Sage and Principal Mark Rockafellow from Marion High School, Paul Rystrom and Principal Allen Dvorak from Rutland

High School, Marty Wood and Principal Gary Peters from Hot Springs High School, and John Pfitzer and Principal Charles Maxon from Harding County High School are to be commended for their involvement and for providing an educational environment in their schools that encourages teachers and students alike to participate in this type of program.

The Spearfish High School team won the state competition and will be visiting Washington next week to compete in the national competition. The Spearfish team is well prepared for what will be an exciting and competitive final round here in Washington on May 2-4. The members of the Spearfish team representing South Dakota in the national finals are: Melissa Bauman, Tricia Beringer, Toni Bickford, Andy Binder, Pam Blair, Chelsea Collins, Christian Colaiacoro, Nicole Dana, Jason Delahoyde, Jacob Dell, Justin Huck, Lucas Humbracht, Sara Jensen, Brandy Lensegrav, Wade McDonald, Justin Nicholas, Eric Nies, Kirby Dana, Jason Schoental, Becky Stokes, Amy Sylvester, Mikayla Tetrault, Jonathon Watson, and James Williams. I am very proud of their accomplishments and wish them well in the national competition.

I would also like to recognize their teachers, Patrick Gainey and Tom Freece, for their tireless efforts over many months in working with these talented students. The district coordinator, Lennis Larson, also contributed a significant amount of time and effort in working with all South Dakota schools who participate in the program.

I commend all the South Dakotans Constitutional scholars who have participated and worked so hard. Our South Dakota student team from Spearfish is currently conducting research and preparing for the upcoming national competition. I wish the students and teacher the best of luck at the We the People . . . national finals, and I look forward to meeting them when they visit Capitol Hill and the Senate.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, April 29, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,512,958,788,432.21 (Five trillion, five hundred twelve billion, nine hundred fifty-eight million, seven hundred eighty-eight thousand, four hundred thirty-two dollars and twenty-one cents).

One year ago, April 29, 1997, the federal debt stood at \$5,348,145,000,000 (Five trillion, three hundred forty-eight billion, one hundred forty-five million).

Five years ago, April 29, 1993, the federal debt stood at \$4,237,171,000,000 (Four trillion, two hundred thirty-seven billion, one hundred seventy-one million).

Ten years ago, April 29, 1988, the federal debt stood at \$2,502,100,000,000 (Two trillion, five hundred two billion, one hundred million).

Fifteen years ago, April 29, 1983, the federal debt stood at \$1,247,917,000,000 (One trillion, two hundred forty-seven billion, nine hundred seventeen million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$4 trillion—\$4,265,041,788,432.21 (Four trillion, two hundred sixty-five billion, forty-one million, seven hundred eighty-eight thousand, four hundred thirty-two dollars and twenty-one cents) during the past 15 years.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF ISRAEL

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in congratulating the people of Israel on the 50th anniversary of their independence.

Fifty years ago, Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, declared the establishment of the State of Israel, ending a centuries-old struggle by the Jewish people to return to their rightful ancestral homeland. The modern dream of a Jewish state had been reborn over 50 years earlier, when Theodore Herzl shared his vision of such a nation during the First World Zionist Conference in Switzerland. Our predecessors in the U.S. Congress supported this vision when they passed a resolution in 1922, calling for the founding of a Jewish nation.

Tragically, the Jewish people were unable to achieve that great goal during the early years of the modern Zionist movement. They were forced to endure the most brutal and systematic repression of a people that humanity has ever witnessed. The six million Jewish men, women, and children who lost their lives during the Holocaust had committed no crime. They were killed, not because of anything they had done, but because of who they were, as part of an inhuman, racist policy that robbed its victims of both life and dignity. The extraordinary courage with which the Jewish people bore this tragedy is a timeless tribute to their enduring faith, and we owe the victims and the survivors a commitment that such persecution and prejudice will never occur again.

From its beginning 50 years ago, the nation of Israel has had a very close and special relationship with the United States. In a perennially turbulent and unpredictable region of the world, Israel has always been a bulwark of stability. It is our closest ally not only in the Middle East, but also in the United Nations. And during times of crisis and conflict in the region, this bond has only been strengthened.

It was no coincidence that America was chosen as the site for the historic Declaration of Principles agreement between the Israeli and the Palestinian people in 1993, since we have always worked with great dedication and commitment to achieve a lasting peace in the Middle East. The Israeli people know that we will continue to work

with them and support them during this long and difficult peace process.

No other ethnic or religious group in human history had endured so much pain and prejudice and overcome so many enormous difficulties in establishing a nation of their own. No other new nation faced so great a threat to its immediate survival as did Israel during its first year of existence. They have created a thriving democracy in a region known for its dictatorships. They have generously opened their land to Jews from all over the world. As we celebrate this inspiring Golden Anniversary of the birth of Israel, we also honor and commend the Israeli people for their courage and commitment in achieving their dream of a homeland and in building the strong and vital democracy and friend that Israel is today.

REPORT CONCERNING THE AUSTRALIA GROUP AND THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION, STOCKPILING AND USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 118

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the Senate of the United States on April 24, 1997, I hereby certify in connection with Condition (7)(C)(i), Effectiveness of Australia Group, that:

—Australia Group members continue to maintain an equally effective or more comprehensive control over the export of toxic chemicals and their precursors, dual-use processing equipment, human, animal and plant pathogens and toxins with potential biological weapons application, and dual-use biological equipment, as that afforded by the Australia Group as of April 25, 1997; and

—The Australia Group remains a viable mechanism for limiting the spread of chemical and biological weapons-related materials and technology, and that the effectiveness of the Australia Group has not been undermined by changes in membership, lack of compliance with common export controls and nonproliferation measures, or the weakening of common controls and nonproliferation measures, in force as of April 25, 1997.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.
THE WHITE HOUSE, April 29, 1998.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

AT 2:21 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by

Ms. Goetz, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate.

H.R. 3546. An act to provide for a national dialogue on Social Security and to establish the Bipartisan Panel to Design Long-Range Social Security Reform.

H.R. 3717. An act to prohibit the expenditure of Federal funds for the distribution of needles or syringes for the hypodermic injection of illegal drugs.

At 6:02 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3579) entitled "An Act making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes."

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 1502. An act entitled "District of Columbia Student Opportunity Scholarship Act of 1997."

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent and referred as indicated:

H.R. 3546. An act to provide for a national dialogue on Social Security and to establish the Bipartisan Panel to Design Long-Range Social Security Reform; to the Committee on Finance.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-4672. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting, a notice relative to a retirement; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4673. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Mental Health Wraparound Demonstration Project; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4674. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Technology), transmitting, pursuant to law, a notice relative to the annual Counterproliferation Review Committee Report; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4675. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Technology), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the Commercial Operations and Support Savings Initiative; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4676. A communication from the Office of the Judge Advocate General, Department of the Navy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Shipbuilding Capability Preservation Agreements" received on April 27, 1998; to the Committee on Armed Services.