

I observed is that they were much further along in their curriculum. The students were much more advanced." end quote.

Mr. President, I have been so impressed with the success of the SAGE program that I introduced the National SAGE Act, legislation to offer grants to qualifying states to assist them in reducing public school class size in the earliest grades. The National SAGE Act authorizes \$75 million over five years to fund a limited number of demonstration grants to states that create innovative programs to reduce public school class size and improve educational performance, as Wisconsin has done. The Secretary of Education would choose the states to receive funding based on several factors, including a state's need to reduce class size, the ability of a state education agency to fund half the program, and the degree to which parents, teachers, administrators, and teacher organizations are consulted in designing the program.

The National SAGE Act is fully offset by cuts in a wasteful and unnecessary federal subsidy that benefits research and development for the world's largest aircraft manufacturer. We can fund this important SAGE program, while simultaneously reducing the federal budget deficit by more than \$2.1 billion over five years.

My legislation also includes a comprehensive research and evaluation component that would document the benefits of smaller class size in the earliest grades, and support efforts to reduce class size in schools all over the country.

I think we all can agree that there are no easy solutions to the problems in our public schools. I believe, however, that targeting federal funds, matched on a 50-50 basis with state funding, to assist school districts moving toward smaller class size, is an effective use of federal dollars. The federal government, in cooperation with local school boards and state governments, has a responsibility to take positive steps toward helping school districts reduce class size as a part of an overall effort to improve student learning. As we near the end of the 105th Congress, I hope my Senate colleagues will embrace SAGE as a serious and exciting reform effort and act to assist states trying to reduce public school class size.

Again, congratulations to the twenty new Wisconsin SAGE schools—you are off to a great start for a successful school year.●

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

● MR. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, September 2, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,566,129,223,474.84 (Five trillion, five hundred sixty-six billion, one hundred twenty-nine million, two hundred twenty-three thousand, four hundred seventy-four dollars and eighty-four cents).

One year ago, September 2, 1997, the federal debt stood at \$5,424,369,000,000

(Five trillion, four hundred twenty-four billion, three hundred sixty-nine million).

Five years ago, September 2, 1993, the federal debt stood at \$4,399,264,000,000 (Four trillion, three hundred ninety-nine billion, two hundred sixty-four million).

Ten years ago, September 2, 1988, the federal debt stood at \$2,605,115,000,000 (Two trillion, six hundred five billion, one hundred fifteen million).

Fifteen years ago, September 2, 1983, the federal debt stood at \$1,358,215,000,000 (One trillion, three hundred fifty-eight billion, two hundred fifteen million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$4 trillion—\$4,207,914,223,474.84 (Four trillion, two hundred seven billion, nine hundred fourteen million, two hundred twenty-three thousand, four hundred seventy-four dollars and eighty-four cents) during the past 15 years.●

NASHVILLE PILOTS COMPLETE HISTORIC JOURNEY

● MR. THOMPSON. Mr. President, I want to share with the Senate a courageous story about two female Tennesseans who recently succeeded in their quest to retrace a historic flight around the world.

Nikki Mitchell and Rhonda Miles landed their single-engine Maule M-5 plane at the Lebanon, Tennessee airport on Saturday, August 22, 1998. Their trip, dubbed the "Bridge of Wings Tour," was completed 49 days after they took off from the same airport.

Their flight commemorates the historical achievement of three female Russian pilots. That journey, known as the "Flight of the Rodina," was a story of courage and stamina in the tradition of Lindbergh and Earhart. It took place in 1938, when the three Russians flew non-stop from Moscow to the southeastern tip of Siberia.

The Russian pilots flew with virtually no radio transmission, through skies so overcast no landmarks were visible, yet they broke a world record and opened up the route across Siberia. They were cheered worldwide and received their country's highest award, the Gold Star of Hero of the Soviet Union.

Sixty years later, Nikki and Rhonda celebrated the accomplishments of the Rodina on the anniversary of its flight. A portion of their 15,000 mile trip included retracing the steps of the three Soviet women from Moscow to the southeastern tip of Siberia. And for this leg of the route they were joined by two Russian women who flew their plane side by side with the American aircraft in a unified flight of honor and goodwill.

As they flew over Russian territory, Nikki and Rhonda were met by crowds and cheers in villages across the Russian Far East. The level of excitement was such that a commercial airline canceled a flight so its fuel could be used for the continuation of their flight.

Before returning to Tennessee, Nikki and Rhonda were also warmly wel-

comed in Alaska, Canada, and Des Moines, Iowa. It goes without saying that upon arrival in Lebanon, Tennessee, they were given a welcome fit for heroes.

Nikki and Rhonda, dressed in blue flight suits and holding flowers, couldn't contain their excitement as they stepped out of the plane. Nikki showed how happy she was to be back in the Volunteer State by immediately kissing the Tennessee soil. Also thankful to be home, Rhonda could not stop smiling as friends rushed to greet her.

Mr. President, I know my colleagues in the Senate join me in saluting Nikki and Rhonda for their courageous journey. These Tennesseans have recreated one of history's most daring and remarkable flights. Their trip will always be remembered as an international effort to honor one of aviation's most exciting moments. I have no doubt that the example set by these women will inspire others to strive toward achieving their own ambitions and goals.●

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

● MR. KYL. Mr. President, yesterday, I led an effort during consideration of the FY99 foreign operations appropriations bill to tighten the conditions under which additional funding is made available to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Although the bill included provisions to prod the IMF into making badly needed reforms of its operations, it stopped short of actually requiring the implementation of those reforms. Instead, it merely conditioned the release of funds on the IMF making a public commitment to reform. That, in my view, was not good enough.

The IMF has not effectively used the funds that have been allocated to it in the past. According to Johns Hopkins University economist, Steve Hanke, few nations have actually graduated from IMF emergency loans. Most have stayed on the dole for years on end. One study found that, of the 137 mostly developing countries from 1965 to 1995, less than a third graduated from IMF loan programs.

The Heritage Foundation has found that, of the IMF's borrowers during 1965 to 1995, no more than half were better off than when they started the loan programs. Almost all were actually poorer, and almost all were deeper in debt.

The IMF's failures are apparent even today. Just a few months ago, the IMF orchestrated a \$22.6 billion bailout package for Russia, yet that country's economy shows no signs of improving. In fact, it is growing worse every day. And all of the experts agree that, unless Russia establishes the kind of rules of law required for a functioning economy, all the money in the world will not help it. We would be fooling ourselves to think otherwise.

Although my amendment failed on a vote of 74 to 19, I am heartened by two things. First, we won more votes for effective IMF reform yesterday than we did when the question was first put to the Senate back in March. And second, the issue is far from settled in the House, which has been more skeptical of providing the IMF with any additional resources. In other words, this issue is far from settled, and my hope is that the final version of the foreign operations bill will either include the more effective reforms I have proposed, or will scale back IMF funding altogether.

FY99 FOREIGN AID SPENDING

Mr. President, pending a final resolution of the IMF issue, I think it is important to consider what else is accomplished by this bill, because there are some very good things about it. First, I would note that the cost of the bill, aside from the IMF, is nearly \$600 million, or 4.5 percent, less than last year's measure. That is significant.

Second, this bill contains \$2.94 billion in aid to Israel: \$1.08 billion in economic assistance and \$1.86 billion in military assistance. I would note that this amount is \$60 million less than was appropriated for Israel last year, and it is consistent with the United States' agreement with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to phase out U.S. economic assistance to Israel over ten years. These funds are crucial to ensuring that Israel's economic and security concerns continue to be adequately addressed.

The level of support for Israel that is contained in this bill sends a clear message to the people of Israel and the world that the world's greatest democracy remains committed to supporting the only democracy in the Middle East, a critical ally that supports American values and interests in a critical region.

Third, the bill contains other provisions that I believe will serve to protect our values and interests in the Middle East. For example, the bill makes clear that the Palestine Broadcasting Corporation is an organization that restricts fundamental press freedoms and broadcasts material that is inimical to U.S. interests, and is therefore unworthy of U.S. assistance.

Fourth, the legislation includes an amendment offered by the Majority Leader—an amendment I cosponsored—that will provide \$10 million to support the Iraqi opposition. Saddam Hussein's recent decision to halt all cooperation with U.N. arms inspections and recent revelations that Iraq had developed the capability to load deadly VX nerve gas in missile warheads is a reminder of the continuing threat posed by this rogue regime to U.S. forces and friends in the region. The additional funding in this bill is intended to reinvigorate the Iraqi opposition as part of an overarching strategy that is aimed at replacing the current government in Iraq.

Fifth, the bill provides clear and strong support for the Agency for

International Development's efforts to ensure that the countries of the former Soviet Union develop effective legal systems capable of addressing the many challenges facing these states as they continue to build stable democratic societies. One area of particular concern is the troubling amount of domestic violence in Russia. This bill makes clear that the active support of women's crisis centers in Russia should be a priority.

Additionally, the bill makes clear that no funds should be provided to Russia if the government of Russia implements any statute, executive order, or regulation that would discriminate against religious groups or communities in Russia.

Sixth, I am pleased that this bill conditions assistance to Russia on Moscow's termination of financial and technical support for Iran's nuclear program. Iran's ongoing efforts to acquire nuclear weapons are a threat to our security; it would be the height of irresponsibility to send American taxpayers' dollars to a country that is assisting a rogue state such as Iran in developing these dangerous weapons.

Along similar lines, the bill wisely restricts aid to North Korea unless the President can certify that it has ceased its efforts to develop nuclear weapons and that it has also stopped assisting the ballistic missile programs of states that support terrorism.

Seventh, the bill takes steps to ensure that American interests in Central Asia are protected. In the next few years, a massive pipeline will be built to transport the vast oil and natural gas resources of the Caspian Sea region to the Mediterranean sea for export to the West. The bill states that an East-West pipeline that travels through Turkey—as opposed to a Northern pipeline through unstable regions of Russia—will provide a secure energy transport system that will support stability and democracy in the region.

CONCLUSION

Mr. President, given that the IMF issue has yet to be resolved—House approval is tenuous at best—I ultimately based my vote on the initial version of the FY99 Foreign Operations bill on the balance of factors I have just discussed. Should it turn out that the IMF funding is ultimately included, particularly without a mechanism for ensuring the implementation of effective reforms of the way the international agency does business, I may well reassess my vote on the final conference report. For now, I am supporting the bill.

TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR CHARLES ALAN WRIGHT

• Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a man for whom I have great respect; a man who inspired and taught me while I attended the University of Texas Law School. I am speaking of Law Professor Charles Alan Wright. Today is Charles Alan Wright's birthday. Charles Alan

Wright is one of the most distinguished constitutional authorities in the country, a champion for racial justice, and the model of what a great lawyer should be. For more than forty years he has shaped and influenced generations of Texas lawyers while teaching at the UT Law School, including myself. Professor Wright also does not shy from a challenge. He has argued twelve times before the Supreme Court, winning most of his cases, some of them landmark decisions. As an author, Professor Wright has written one of the most definitive texts in the arena of law, *Federal Practice and Procedure*, cited by many as the bible for federal judges. His pursuit of professional excellence is mirrored by his righteous courage, having fought for desegregation and to put an end to racial intolerance.

I would like to quote from the Austin American-Statesman: "For Wright's accomplishments in the legal field, his country thanks him. For his sterling record as a professor, the university and its graduates thank him. For his personal courage in opening minds, all Austin should thank him." Happy Birthday Charles and thank you. I ask that the Sunday, June 21, 1998, Austin American-Statesman editorial paying tribute to Charles Alan Wright be printed in the RECORD.

The editorial follows:

[From the Austin American-Statesman June 21, 1998]

A SCHOLAR AND A LEADER

Charles Alan Wright is lucky enough to live in interesting times and smart enough to make the most of it.

A profile of this towering scholar and professor at the University of Texas law school in today's editions by American-Statesman reporter Mary Ann Roser is a testament to his presence on campus and in the world at large.

Wright has made an indelible imprint on the law school, an institution he helped raise in stature in his tenure of more than 40 years. And his impact in the legal profession will be just as lasting, as his multi-volume bible of federal court procedures, *Federal Practice and Procedure*, attests.

Wright joined the law school faculty in 1955 and made an immediate impression. From intramural football to the controversial defense of President Richard M. Nixon in the Watergate scandal, Wright has been involved both in the school and in the life around him. As he is today as a member of the legal team appealing the Hopwood decision by the federal court of appeals.

Wright brought status and stature to the UT School of Law. His high profile and prestige certainly helped attract the faculty that has kept the law school in the top rank in the country.

Wright will always be known for his work with the Nixon defense team during the Watergate years and for his involvement with the prestigious American Law Institute, for which he served as president and vice president.

Those intimate with the legal profession are impressed, too, that three U.S. Supreme Court justices have appointed him to the Standing Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Judicial Conference. He served the conference from 1964 to 1993.

But Wright's personal courage in challenging this community's racial intolerance in