

Whereas Greece is one of the only 3 nations in the world, beyond the former British Empire, that has been allied with the United States in every major international conflict this century;

Whereas the heroism displayed in the historic World War II Battle of Crete epitomized Greece's sacrifice for freedom and democracy as it presented the Axis land war with its first major setback and set off a chain of events which significantly affected the outcome of World War II;

Whereas these and other ideals have forged a close bond between our 2 nations and their peoples;

Whereas March 25, 1998, marks the 177th anniversary of the beginning of the revolution which freed the Greek people from the Ottoman Empire; and

Whereas it is proper and desirable to celebrate with the Greek people and to reaffirm the democratic principles from which our 2 great nations were born: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 25, 1998, as "Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy"; and

(2) requests the President to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

NOTICES OF HEARINGS

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I would like to announce for information of the Senate and the public that an Executive Session of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources will be held on Wednesday, February 4, 1998, 9:30 a.m., in SD-430 of the Senate Dirksen Building. The Committee will consider S. 1579, Rehabilitation Act amendments.

For further information, please call the committee, 202/224-5375.

NOTICE OF ADDITION TO HEARING AGENDA

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public that the nomination of Margaret H. Greene to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the United States Enrichment Corporation will be considered at the hearing scheduled for Wednesday, February 4, 1998 at 9:30 a.m. in Room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office building in Washington, D.C.

For further information, please call Allyson Kennett at (202) 224-5070.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

THE CRISIS IN CHIAPAS

• Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, every day we read about bone-chilling atrocities around the world, in Algeria, Colombia, Sri Lanka, and even in Mexico.

I have always felt relations between the United States and our southern neighbor left a lot to be desired. On the one hand it is a relationship fraught with tensions fueled by illegal immigration, racism, drug trafficking, and a

long history of misunderstanding. Yet on the other hand it is a relationship based on friendship and respect, and of many shared interests.

A traveler to Mexico is immediately struck by the great disparity in the standards of living between our two countries. Millions of Mexico's people, especially members of indigenous groups, live in poverty. If they are lucky they own a piece of land, but rarely enough to support their families. They work from sunrise to nightfall bent over a hoe in the fields, or at some other backbreaking job. They sleep in a house built of scraps of wood and tin with a dirt floor, wash in a polluted stream, live in fear of the police, and do their best to care for half a dozen poorly clothed, hungry children who have little hope of anything better.

But there is another Mexico. It is one of modern factories, busy cities, a government that is evolving from one-party rule to democracy, and an economy that has been largely state controlled becoming increasingly market-based. It is managed by well-educated professionals who grapple daily with seemingly intractable problems.

Mexico is, above all, a land of contrasts, and the United States has an enormous stake in Mexico's development. Our economies are increasingly interdependent. Some of our most pressing problems are also Mexico's. No fence, no matter how impenetrable, along our border, will solve those problems, whether they are drugs, other types of crime, infectious diseases, polluted air and water. If we are to combat these threats successfully, we have to work together.

It is for that reason, Mr. President, that the recent violence in Mexico—in the states of Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca—should be of such concern to both our countries. Last July I spoke on this floor about the situation in Chiapas, and warned that unless the Mexican Government dealt effectively with the causes of the conflict there, renewed violence was likely. My warning, like similar warnings by many others, was ignored. Today I rise to speak again about Chiapas, and the tragic events there shortly before Christmas. But I want to emphasize that Chiapas is representative of a much larger problem in Mexico—as in so many other parts of the world—which can most succinctly be attributed to the widening disparity between the haves and have-nots.

The brief but dramatic Zapatista uprising in 1994 was the result of centuries of discrimination and mistreatment of indigenous people in Chiapas, a situation largely unknown outside Mexico's borders. That violent outburst shook the nation, and led to talks between the Zapatistas and Mexican authorities which sought to address the underlying causes of the unrest. Those negotiations resulted in the San Andres Accords, but the Mexican Government walked away from that agreement apparently concluding that it was too favorable to the Zapatistas.

Whatever hope there was that those negotiations would lead to profound changes in Chiapas had been virtually extinguished by the end of last year. The Mexican Government's attention was focused elsewhere, mostly on the national elections which to its credit were the most free and fair in Mexico's history.

Meanwhile, Chiapas has remained in an undeclared state of war between the Zapatistas and their sympathizers, and anti-Zapatista paramilitary groups who have been encouraged and supported by local and state authorities. Tens of thousands of Mexican soldiers have also been sent to Chiapas, where they have contributed to the tensions and they have apparently stood by as local officials have armed the paramilitary groups. Caught in the middle are the people of Chiapas.

Three days before Christmas, Chiapas again exploded in violence. In the village of Acteal, 45 unarmed Indian men, women and children were slaughtered in cold blood by paramilitary forces reportedly with the support of government authorities. Two weeks later, Mexican police fired on a crowd in the town of Ocosingo that was protesting the December 22nd massacre, killing a woman and wounding her 3 year-old daughter and a 17 year-old boy.

Mr. President, who but the most hate-filled people would carry out such a barbaric deed? The fact that government officials are reputed to have had a role in the slaughter is particularly outrageous. But it should not surprise anyone who knows the history and has followed events in Chiapas. In fact, in the months leading up to the Acteal massacre human rights groups issued report after report describing acts of provocation and violence by paramilitary groups and Mexican soldiers. Members of Congress sent letters of concern to President Zedillo. Yet these reports and letters did not even receive a response. Chiapas was a powder-keg waiting to explode even before the Zapatistas first emerged on the scene in support of indigenous concerns about discrimination, land rights and the lack of social services. What happened in Acteal is only the latest example, albeit a particularly atrocious one, of the kind of brutality that is a fact of daily life for many indigenous people in Chiapas.

Since then, the Mexican Government has taken several encouraging steps. A federal investigation is ongoing. At least 40 persons suspected of committing the murders have been arrested. State and local officials who allegedly instigated the attack, and who later tried to cover it up, have been arrested or removed from office. The Minister of the Interior has been replaced. The Government of the State of Chiapas freed several hundred prisoners, in an attempt to restart the peace talks. These are important steps. Had the government taken the advice of so