

We in the United States owe the UN our profound gratitude for the assistance that has been provided to victims of Hurricane Katrina on our gulf coast. Within days of the disaster, the United Nations launched a campaign to coordinate relief assistance with federal efforts. UN agencies have distributed life-saving supplies, are supporting the surveillance work of the Centers for Disease Control, and are assisting in evacuee registration and tracking of missing children.

Day in and day out, we see evidence of the critical work that the United Nations undertakes around the world. The organization continues to lead humanitarian relief efforts in the wake of last year's tsunami disaster in Southeast Asia and has launched an emergency response to the devastating earthquake in Pakistan. Through UNAIDS, the organization coordinates a comprehensive global response to the fight against HIV/AIDS, working to halt and reverse the epidemic by 2015. The UN women's fund, UNIFEM, supports women's empowerment and gender equality, in particular through supporting local initiatives to end violence against women. The UN Development Program is supporting democratic governance projects in Iraq, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Haiti and over 150 countries worldwide. Inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency have uncovered violations by Iran and North Korea, and the agency's safeguards have assured the world that other countries are not diverting nuclear material from their peaceful nuclear power programs.

Finally, the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, extends protection and life saving assistance to some 19 million refugees and other vulnerable persons. In May 2005, I had the opportunity to visit the Oure Cassoni refugee camp along the Chad-Sudan border, and was incredibly impressed with UNHCR's work in providing direly needed food, shelter, and education services for nearly 25,000 refugees. The agency's aid staff is working tirelessly to serve this large population, and I witnessed extraordinary dedication and professionalism.

For 60 years, the United Nations has been on the front lines leading humanitarian stabilization efforts under conditions and in situations that are the worst of the worst. Now the organization is focused on another critical task: reforming itself. Many, including Secretary General Annan, have recognized that the UN must change the way it does business if it is to maintain the support of its members and effectively address the challenges that the global community will face in the future.

This reordering and restructuring is needed, significant, and moving forward. To highlight a few items, as a result of the support demonstrated at the UN Summit last month, member states are working to create a Human Rights Council to replace the defunct Human Rights Commission, in order to more

effectively advance the rights and freedoms that continue to be denied to far too many. The establishment of a Peace Building Commission will make the UN, and the world, better equipped to prevent post-conflict countries from relapsing into violence, reducing the conditions that breed terrorism. And the dozens of personnel, management and budget reforms that have been proposed and endorsed by member states will make the organization more efficient in the important work it does.

Now, as the United Nations moves into the next chapter of its history, it is imperative that this momentum for change continues. Implementing these reforms is the responsibility of the member states. The United States can play a critical leadership role in securing their support, and their action. The future effectiveness of the United Nations lies in the balance, and I have every expectation that the member states can and will deliver. I encourage the Members of this chamber to fully support the efforts that are underway at the United Nations.

Article One of the United Nations Charter states that the purposes of the organization are to maintain international peace and security; address international social, economic and cultural problems; and to promote fundamental human rights and freedoms. Today, although tremendous progress has been made, we still need the UN to advance these goals. Therefore, I congratulate and thank the United Nations, its current personnel and staff, as well as those who have served in the past, for all that it has done to advance peace, security and freedom around the world, and for all that it must do in the years ahead to realize the vision of its founders.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I would like the RECORD to reflect that I was necessarily absent for the votes on the confirmations of Brian Edward Sandoval to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Nevada, Vote No. 265, and Harry Sandlin Mattice, Jr., to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee, Vote No. 266, on Monday, October 24, 2005, so I could assess the impact of Hurricane Wilma on Florida. Had I been present for these votes, I would have voted in favor of both nominations.

FORT RENO MINERAL LEASING ACT

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, on October 6, 2005, I introduced S. 1832, the "Fort Reno Mineral Leasing Act". At that time I introduced letters of support for this legislation. Since then I have received a letter from Mrs. Donna Von Tungeln that I would like to submit for the RECORD.

Mrs. Von Tungeln and her late husband Henry Jo have been active supporters of preserving the historical

buildings at Fort Reno. Their dedicated work to this project is greatly appreciated.

I ask unanimous consent the following letter be printed for the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

VON TUNGELN FARMS,

Calumet, OK, September 28, 2005.

Hon. JIM INHOFE,

Russell Building,

Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR INHOFE: I appreciate your interest in helping the citizens of Oklahoma to preserve one of our most important historical assets, the buildings of Fort Reno. Funding is badly needed to restore and maintain the Fort's buildings, many of which were built as early as the 1880's. The legislation you are willing to introduce on our behalf will insure that these priceless buildings are not lost, but are preserved and maintained and made available for viewing and use by generations of Oklahomans.

I also appreciate that you support a revenue-neutral approach to financing the restoration of Fort Reno without increasing our tax burden. My late husband, Henry Jo, first suggested this mechanism about two years ago, and worked to have it considered. Your willingness to implement the plan means a great deal to me. Success with the legislation will mean much to many other Oklahomans, as well as the thousands of out-of-state tourists who visit Fort Reno each year.

Sincerely,

DONNA VON TUNGELN.

TRIBUTE TO PAUL AND SHEILA WELLSTONE

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise today in memory of Paul and Sheila Wellstone. It is hard to believe that on this date 3 years ago, the lives of Paul and Sheila Wellstone, and others, were taken in a plane crash in Minnesota. On that day, I lost a good friend, the Senate lost a leader, and the American people lost an advocate who was never afraid to stand up and speak for those who had no voice.

Today I honor my friend and colleague, Senator Paul Wellstone, who inspired so many people to speak up and to serve. Even as I stand here today, I cannot imagine that when I turn around I won't see Paul standing at his desk, his arms flailing in the air, making his point with great passion.

Paul inspired me to run for the U.S. Senate. His brilliant example reminded me that you don't need to be powerful or rich to make a difference. You just need to have an honest concern for others, an optimistic spirit, and the courage to act. Paul embodied these traits.

I am grateful for the time we had with Paul. He and I worked on everything from domestic violence and education to providing health care to veterans and protecting families from asbestos.

As the month of October, which is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, draws to a close, there is much the Senate has accomplished on this issue. The Violence Against Women Act reauthorization, which contains many improvements to the current law, has