

COMMEMORATING THE 84TH BIRTHDAY OF HIS MAJESTY KING BHUMIBOL ADULYADEJ

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, on behalf of myself as ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Senator JAMES INHOFE, the ranking member of the East Asia and Pacific Subcommittee, I rise today to commemorate the 85th birthday anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej who has reigned for 66 years as King of Thailand.

Over 50 years ago, the King, also known as Rama IX, a long-time and proven friend of the United States, addressed a Joint Session of Congress. He and the people of Thailand have partnered with the people of the United States in war and in peace. As noted in the recent Thailand-U.S. Joint Vision Statement preceding President Obama's recent trip to Thailand, "... the Thai-U.S. defense alliance has promoted regional stability by fostering cooperation in areas that enables both nations to address shared security concerns effectively".

The King has been internationally recognized for his consistent dedication to promote the well-being of the Thai people. Among the awards received is the U.N. Development Program First Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award. Over the last 60 years the King has initiated thousands of development projects throughout Thailand addressing a wide range of challenges including public health and education, agricultural development and reforestation.

Mr. President, in the Congress extensive time and effort are dedicated to the consideration of major challenges to the United States, domestically and overseas. Endless debate carries on to determine how to deal with leaders in those countries who do not share democratic values, and in fact are opposed to the United States actively engaging in global free trade and the promotion of our national security.

Consequently, it is a pleasure and an honor on behalf of Senator INHOFE and myself to highlight the life of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who has been steadfast in his friendship to the American people. He is the longest-reigning monarch in the history of Thailand and currently the world's longest-reigning monarch as well.

Mr. President I was pleased to recently visit Thailand and meet with government officials regarding Thailand's participation in the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction, CTR, Program. Thailand is actively working to counter biological threats. Among other areas, the U.S. will also continue to work to help Thailand control infectious disease that could become the source of a pandemic or the target of terrorists seeking to create a biological weapon.

In conclusion, I am grateful for the overall relationship between our two countries, and look forward to developments in the future which will bring us closer together.

• Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, December 5 marks the 85th birthday of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand. I would like to offer my sincerest congratulations to His Majesty and to the people of Thailand as they commemorate his 66-year reign of Thailand.

The United States and Thailand have had an extensive, close relationship for nearly 200 years, beginning with the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in 1833. This treaty—the first U.S. treaty in Asia—cemented the friendship between the American and Thai people. King Bhumibol has nurtured this relationship in line with our shared values of democracy and rule law. He has been a vital supporter of a free and open society in Thailand and a stabilizing force in the government's transitions of political power. As the world's longest serving monarch, he has placed his commitment to the Thai people above all.

I have visited Thailand many times over a span of more than 30 years. As chairman of the East Asia and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee, I was fortunate to continue this close relationship, visiting Thailand numerous times to meet Thai leaders, and reaffirm my support for a strong alliance with the United States. I would like to thank King Bhumibol and the Thai government for the courtesies extended to me over the past 6 years of my service in the U.S. Senate. Going forward, I am confident that the U.S.-Thai alliance will continue to be a critical partnership in guaranteeing stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr. President, I am so pleased to join the people of Thailand in celebrating the birthday of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, and extend my best wishes to His Majesty for his good health.●

GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I would like to thank Senator WICKER for bringing attention to the need for the Department of Defense, and all Federal agencies, to include American-made wood products in green building standards and rating systems.

I would also like to express my continued support for Federal Government measures designed to spur the design and construction of high-performance green buildings.

However, I am concerned that discouraging certain wood building products and materials from use in Federal buildings because they do not comply with the LEED standard but are otherwise acceptable for U.S. building projects, may undermine the Federal Government's energy efficiency goals.

Wood products are among the most "green" of all building materials.

With the green building market estimated to reach as high as \$140 billion by 2013, securing a strong place for wood is essential to the wood products industry's future growth.

Wood is an ideal green building material because it is renewable, stores carbon that reduces greenhouse gases, and is energy efficient.

There are several green building rating systems being used by Federal agencies and the private marketplace now, and the competition among these systems has resulted in improvements in all of the green building standards. Some of these rating systems recognize the benefits of American-made wood products in their scoring system.

It is important that the Department of Defense, General Services Administration and other Federal agencies ensure that multiple green building standards be considered for the design and construction of Federal buildings.

I believe the best approach is to permit the marketplace to decide which rating system is best suited for each project and Congress should encourage all of the rating systems to compete for government contracts.

REMEMBERING NORMA HOLMGREN

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity today to pay tribute to a wonderful woman, devoted mother and grandmother, loyal friend, exceptional employee, and patriotic American Norma Holmgren. Norma was my Northern Utah Area Director for 26 years and was devoted to our state and nation.

Sadly, Norma passed away this past weekend, as a result of a tragic accident as she was taking her daily walk. Norma kept herself very active and physically fit and you could often find Norma walking the streets of her neighborhood enjoying her surroundings and neighbors.

Norma retired from public service almost 10 years ago, however her retirement did not stop her from participating in her community and continuing her interest in republican politics. In fact, my staff contacted her last week to seek her advice on a constituent's request. She was always available and happy to share her knowledge. She spent many years working for the ideas and philosophy of the Republican Party, and assumed numerous leadership positions to further the cause. Norma loved politics and even after leaving the government and political arena, she still loved a good political conversation and was keenly interested in what was happening in our state and nation.

Norma was a ferocious reader, and it was not unusual for Norma to visit her local Costco and buy up to 20 books at a time. She loved to learn and continue her education on so many issues, and would spend hours curled up with a good book.

She also loved antiques and was widely known for her collections that she beautifully displayed throughout her home. She would often invite friends to come and see her latest find or beautiful item and she was very proud of her life-long interest of antiques.