CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE

May 25, 2005

S5940

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, tomorrow, the Senate will resume consideration of the nomination of John Bolton to be U.S. ambassador to the U.N. As a reminder, cloture was just filed a moment ago on the nomination. The cloture vote on Bolton will occur at 6 p.m. tomorrow night. If cloture is invoked, we will immediately proceed to a confirmation vote. Therefore, I encourage all Members who wish to speak before the nomination vote to contact the managers as soon as possible.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order following the remarks of Senators LAUTENBERG, SNOWE, and SESSIONS.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, as we approach this weekend, I thought I would give some thought to what occasions this commemorative holiday and what I think about as we approach Memorial Day. I want to recall some of the incidents, the results of war and its consequences.

It has been a historic week in the Senate. We averted a showdown that could have permanently damaged this institution and destroyed the unique American system of checks and balances that makes our Government the envy of the world. This was the topic of nonstop television coverage and a forest worth of newspaper articles.

In short, the story about the Senate’s procedure for approving judicial nominees totally dominated the news, but there was another story this week, a story that did not receive much attention. It was the story of at least 14 brave American soldiers who died in Iraq since Sunday. These deaths came as a wave of bombings and suicide attacks engulfed Baghdad and other cities.

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While we go about our business in the Senate, while other Americans go
about their daily lives, the war in Iraq drags on. It has been a month since the Prime Minister  Ibrahim al-Jaafari announced his new government, and during that time at least 620 people have been killed in Iraq, including 58 U.S. troops. During that time, it has been a painful reminder for families across America and across my State. Sadly, the American people have become so numb to these deaths that they are no longer considered major news, and the administration has not helped matters by continuing its questionable policy of banning photographs or video images of the flag-draped coffins of our heroes making their final trip home.

I have to ask a question: Is the purpose of this policy to hide the sacrifices of our soldiers and their families? I am hard-pressed to think of any other reason. This is an issue I have discussed on the floor of the Senate before. It stuns me that at the moment of the return of the remains of a family member, no one is covered in honor by the flag of our country is hidden from the public. No photos are allowed, no photographs allowed, and no attention paid.

As a veteran of an earlier war, I am very conscious of our responsibility to veterans and to those who are fighting the battle for all of us, and I wonder why the administration continues its policy of banning photographs or video images of the flag-draped coffins of our heroes making their final trip home. It seems as if they want to conceal the sacrifices of our soldiers and their families. I am hard pressed to think of any other reason.

As have most of my colleagues, where there has been a loss of life in the State that they represent, we have gone to a funeral or a ceremony acknowledging the sacrifice that these individuals have made and the pain their families undergo. I was at a funeral at Arlington earlier this year and the remains of one of our New Jersey soldiers was buried. His family was present, mother and father. He was a young man, in his early twenties. I watched the ceremony as the Honor Guard escorted his coffin to the place of burial. It was covered with a flag. The Honor Guard was so precise and so immaculate in their appearance, so honorable, they took the American flag and folded it so gently but ever so precisely until through eight escorts and past the Honor Guard, they made the folds so carefully until they got it into a triangle, and the captain of the Guard walked over to the man’s mother and presented it to her.

It was such a touching ceremony, this recognition of honor, this understanding of what their soldier who perished had done for his country. I cannot understand why it is that we are not allowed to photograph these coffins when they come home with the remains, when they come to the Dover Air Force Base in Delaware before they go to the mortuary where the families have an opportunity to make certain that it is their family member who is being buried. But there is no identification of name, there is no ceremony. No family needs to feel as though its privacy is being invaded.

So I question that. I think it would be appropriate on this Memorial Day to start off after the Memorial Day recess from the Senate, when the soldier who is returned in a flag-draped coffin is entitled to receive the honor and the respect of the country that sent them there, our country. It is appropriate.

The pain does not disappear every day—reports of car bombings, roadside bombs, suicide attacks. They kill soldiers, they kill civilians, they kill children, sometimes in the double digits in a single incident, 20, 30 people. What they are trying to do is crush the spirit of the Iraqis who have been through so much at this point. Our people continue on bravely serving their country, serving the orders that they get from their Nation.

Within the last week, military leaders, however, had a change of tune when the leading general in charge of our operations in Iraq described as a sober assessment the situation in Iraq. That is the first that we have heard about that. We have heard continuously that we are making progress to do the job, that the Iraqis are learning what they have to do to take over. It is not true. I was in Iraq approximately a year ago and saw how slowly the job of preparing policemen to take over was going. Even when the recruits were found to be hopelessly untrained for the assignment, without the ability to drive a car, no driver’s license, not literate. They were training something like 80 every 6 weeks.

So it is going to take a long time at the rate of 80 in 6 weeks to get 50,000 policemen trained.

According to the assessment that we heard from the commanding general, the bottom line was that American troops had 8 months to 1 year to come. For the 140,000 who serve there today, there is no quick end in sight.

I do not take the floor to debate the wisdom of the war in Iraq or the way it has been prosecuted. Today I speak to honor the more than 1,600 American soldiers who have given their lives in Iraq and more than 170 who have died in Afghanistan.

In front of my office in the Hart Building, there are pictures of those fallen heroes identifying them by name as a reminder of what is going on even as we discuss issues of some critical relevance and some not so important. The most important thing is that we have people who are in their young years paying with their lives for the battle in which we are engaged in the Middle East.

Monday is Memorial Day. It is a day when our Nation honors the fallen heroes of all of our wars. I hope every American will pause for a minute during the day and reflect on the price that is being paid for our freedom and on those who have paid that price. The
Yoe M. Anterios, Newark; Specialist Bryan L. Freeman, Lumberton; Corporal Tyler Ryan, Gloucester City; Private First Class Stephen Benish, Linden; Specialist David P. Mahlenbrock, Maple Shade; Lance Cpl Brian P. Parrello, West Milford; 1st Class Sgt Paul Karpowich, trained in Pennsauken; Specialist Alain Kamolvathin, Blairstown; Sergeant John Sherman, Neptune; Corporal Sean P. Kelly, Pitman; Lance Corporal Harry Raymond Swain III, Millville; PFC Min Chol, River Vale—his picture is here; Captain Steve Grimes, Mother lives in Dover; Major Steven W. Thornton, based at Fort Monmouth; Private Robert C. White, Camden; Major John Charles Spahr, Cherry Hill; Staff SGT Anthony Lee Goodwin, Mt. Holly; Lance Corporal Jourdan L. Grez, Long Branch.

I also want to mention two civilians from New Jersey who were killed while supporting the war effort in Iraq; Paul M. Johnson of Eagleswood, and Thomas Jaichner of Burlington City. I know each of my colleagues will join me this weekend in paying tribute to these brave soldiers who have sacrificed their lives for our country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I be allowed to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. (The remarks of Ms. Snowe related to the introduction of S. 1127 are printed in today's Record under "Statements On Introduced Bills And Joint Resolutions.")

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:53 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, May 26, 2005, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate May 25, 2005:

COMMODY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION
WALTER LUKICH, OF INDIANA, TO BE A COMMISSIONER OF THE COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING APRIL 13, 2010 (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
JOHN M. REICH, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF THRIFT SUPERVISION FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 31, 2007, VICE JAMES GILLIAM, WHO RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
WILLIAM J. LEFFERT, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY, VICE ARDEN REMENT, JR., WHO RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
ASHOK G. KAVERSHWAR, OF MARYLAND, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, VICE ELLEN G. ENGELMAN, WHO RESIGNED.

INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
JAN R. HOYER, OF TEXAS, TO BE UNITED STATES ALT-TELLER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, VICE HECTOR E. MORALES.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
KATHLEEN L. OLSSEN, OF OREGON, TO BE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION, VICE JOSÉPH BORDOGNA.

IN THE ARMY
TO BE MAJOR GENERAL
BRIG. GEN. ROBERT J. KASULKE

TO BE BRIGADIER GENERAL
COL. STANLEY L. K. PLEMMING

THE FOLLOWING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 2203:

COL. LARRY J. STUDER

IN THE NAVY
TO BE CAPTAIN
ROBERT G. BERGMAN

TO BE CAPTAIN
WILLIAM S. GURECK

THE FOLLOWING NAVY RESERVE OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 264:

ANNIE B. ANDREWS
CAROLINE M. OLINGER
YOLANDA Y. REAGAN
SUSAN L. SHERMAN

THE FOLLOWING NAVY RESERVE OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 264:

SCOTT D. KATZ
JOHN S. KRISTJANSSON
JAMIES P. PITTIGROSE
WILLIAM J. SCHULZ
ROBERT S. STANLEY
F. G. STROEBOZ

THE FOLLOWING NAVY RESERVE OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 264:

WILLIAM T. AINSWORTH
WILLIAM J. BRANDON
MICHAEL A. KELLY
DOUGLAS S. KILLEY
G. D. ROBERTS

THE FOLLOWING NAVY RESERVE OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 264:

KEVIN R. ANDERSEN
ALAN J. ABRAMSON
DEBRA A. BODENSTEDT
TIMOTHY J. BLOCK
JEFFREY L. BAY

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KEVIN B. TERRY
JAMES D. SYRING
HEIDEMARIE STEFANYSHYNPIPER
DANIEL M. SEIGENTHALER
STEPHEN P. REIMERS

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STEPHEN F. BRIMMER
PETE R. SCHUEPF
DANIEL M. SEIGENTHALER
PAUL E. SKOGERBOR
REINHARDE STREIFENHEUSER

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MICHAEL J. VIRELAND
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ROBERT E. CLARK
MARK E. CEDRUN
KEFF M. CARTER
DENNIS E. CARPENTER
BRADLEY A. CARPENTER
FREDERICK J. CAPRIA
THOMAS M. CALABRESE
ROBERT P. BURKE
JOHN L. BRYANT, JR.
KEVIN R. BRENTON
BRIAN J. BRAKKE
DEBRA A. BODENSTEDT
TIMOTHY J. BLOCK
JEFFREY L. BAY
KEVIN R. ANDERSEN
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