

Foreign Relations Committee to quickly report out the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act. I have not spoken directly to it, but I will speak about getting this act passed. We need to get it put into law.

This legislation increases pressure on Khartoum, provides greater support for the African Union mission in Darfur to help protect civilians and impose sanctions on individuals who are responsible for the atrocities, and encourages the appointment of a U.S. special envoy to help advance a comprehensive peace process for Darfur and all of Sudan. It also calls for the United States to push for a strong Security Council resolution, amongst other things, that expands the arms embargo.

We can no longer remain indifferent to the suffering Africans of Darfur. We must move beyond the politics and agree on the fundamentals that will help save lives immediately. It is quite simple. When the "never" is removed from "never again," it will happen—again and again and again. We cannot be silent and inactive on Darfur as people die.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

CONGRATULATING THE PEOPLE OF IRAQ

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise to congratulate the people of Iraq on writing another chapter in the history of their nation. After the coalition forces toppled Saddam's oppressive regime, many believed it would take years until the Iraqis would be in control of their government apparatus. They were wrong. On June 28, 2004, the transfer of power took place and Iraqis became the rulers of their nation. On January 20, 2005, millions of people, including women, risked their lives to choose the members of a temporary Parliament responsible for drafting the new constitution. This past weekend, millions of Iraqis lined up to cast their ballots in more than 6,000 polling places across Iraq.

The Iraqi people's vision of a free and stable Iraq led them to an important milestone—voting on a democratic Iraqi-written constitution. Last weekend, through will and determination, more than 60 percent of the eligible voters in Iraq chose to speak up against tyranny and oppression—a higher percentage of voter turnout than in the 2004 U.S. Presidential election.

What we saw in Iraq on October 15, 2005, proved that even those oppressed for decades will peacefully choose their own future when given a chance to participate in a fair and open electoral process.

There had been much speculation that a majority of Sunnis would boycott the referendum. However, until the last few days before the vote, leaders of the Shi'a and the Kurds worked

relentlessly to convince their Sunni countrymen and women to vote either for or against the constitution. Their work came to fruition when millions of Sunnis lined up to cast their ballots and decide the future of their country.

While many Sunnis voted against the proposed constitution, the referendum sent a clear message that all Iraqis are willing to invest in the democratic process.

By casting their ballots, millions of Iraqis also sent a strong message against terrorism. Ideology of hate has no place in the world, no place in Islam, and most certainly no place in Iraq. Terrorists' tactics of striking innocent men and women and children are despicable and cowardly. Terror has not derailed the political process, nor the establishment of the rule of law. Despite fears of retaliation by al-Qaida and other terrorists, millions of Iraqis chose to participate in the process that will decide the future of their nation.

The Iraqi security forces have also started to make a significant difference. According to our military leaders and officials on the ground, the Iraqi security forces were clearly in the lead in securing polling sites around the country. Backed by the coalition forces, the Iraqi military presence was increased by 35 percent since January. Press reports indicated that scattered instances of violence were quickly suppressed by the Iraqis.

This accomplishment indicates the willingness of the Iraqi security forces to stand up to insurgents and protect their fellow countrymen. With each Iraqi soldier trained and equipped to carry out the mission, Iraq draws closer to be able to stand on its own and protect Iraq's freedom.

As they have learned the power of the ballot box, Iraqis will soon be experiencing the strength of the rule of law during the trial of Saddam Hussein that convenes today. Only a couple thousand years ago, thousands of Iraqis—including women and children—were killed, tortured, and wrongfully imprisoned. Nevertheless, the current Iraqi Government fully understands the importance of a fair trial and the precedents it will establish. As a result of these advancements in Iraq, the country's most brutal dictator will face trial by a jury of his peers, a trial that thousands of Saddam's victims never received. The world will pay close attention as the Iraqi judicial system moves forward with this challenge. I am confident the Iraqis will adhere to the highest standard of the rule of law to reach a proper conclusion.

Today, the successful referendum in Iraq would not have been possible without our brave men and women in uniform who were called by our Nation's leaders to perform a noble but difficult task. Their commitment and dedication to peace and prosperity around the globe has never been more evident. Nearly 150,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines are deployed in Iraq, doing

their duty with pride, patriotism, and perseverance. Our success in Iraq and Afghanistan has not come without cost. Those who have fallen have served a cause greater than themselves and deserve a very special honor. My heart goes out to the families whose sons and daughters have made the ultimate sacrifice.

The people of Iraq have clearly spoken of their desire for a free and democratic Iraq. The terrorists understand that their only chance is to break the will of the American people and force us to retreat. We will not waver in our support of the Iraqi people. We will not waver in our support of the democratic process and the rule of law. And we will not waver in our cause for freedom in a land that has known nothing but oppression. The lessons learned in previous world conflicts have proven that when the stakes are so high, we must remain firm, resist the enemy, and fight until the war is won.

Mr. President, our Nation has a leader who has made it clear that winning the war on terror is a defining moment for the civilized world. Since September 11, 2001, President Bush has taken bold steps to ensure the safety and the security of the United States, especially against terrorist organizations and the nation states that support them.

Specifically, since President Bush has taken office, the United States, under his leadership, has—and I would like to list a number of successes against terrorist organizations—over-taken two terrorist regimes, rescued two nations and liberated some 50 million people; captured or killed close to two-thirds of known senior al-Qaida operatives; captured or killed 45 of the 55 most wanted in Iraq, including Iraq's deposed dictator, Saddam Hussein; hunted down thousands of terrorists and regime remnants in Afghanistan and Iraq; disrupted terrorist cells on most continents and likely prevented a number of planned attacks.

This is an astounding record of accomplishment for our Commander in Chief, his national security staff, and the phenomenal men and women of our military services. The United States went to war in Afghanistan and Iraq, risking significant loss of life and treasure to protect our way of life. Our goals are clear and twofold: Destroy the nexus of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction that personified the two ousted regimes and create in their stead stable, democratic states able to participate in the modern world today. And we see the results of that successful effort in both Afghanistan and Iraq. We succeeded in our first goal, having killed or captured perpetrators and supporters of the enemy terrorists.

As I discussed previously, the courageous people of Afghanistan and Iraq are making remarkable progress toward adoption of constitutional reforms to secure momentum for a lasting democratic independence. Our Commander in Chief deserves recognition for these achievements. America

is safer because he took action, and the world will be a better place when the foes of freedom are defeated. We must stay the course and follow through with determination and perseverance. We must turn to those who doubt our mission and speak of the tremendous courage being shown by the Iraqi and Afghan people who are just beginning to enjoy the fruits of freedom. We must constantly thank our men and women in our Armed Forces who have so valiantly served our Nation, and we must remind ourselves that the global war on terrorism is not about religion or ethnicity; it is about freedom and whether we will allow others to dictate our freedom. We must not give in to the ideology of terror, and we must remain committed to those who need our assistance so much.

As we review the history of Saddam Hussein as he begins standing trial today, I view with optimism the ability of the Iraqi people to conduct a fair and just trial. They face a history of continued inhumane actions by a ruthless dictator in Saddam Hussein for thousands upon thousands of people who were massacred and killed for no real, apparent reason other than the fact that they disagreed with Saddam, who was the ruthless dictator in charge.

History takes us back many years. Saddam came into power a number of decades ago, and during that time we saw a record number of injustices that occurred to the Iraqi people. We saw, in 1980, the persecution of the Faylee Kurds. We saw, in 1983, the Kurdish massacres targeted against Barzanis and the KDP. In 1988, we saw the Anfal campaign. As many as 182,000 people disappeared during this time period.

In 1988, we saw in Halabja the Saddam regime launched chemical attacks against more than 40 of its own villagers. On March 16, 1988, the regime dropped sarin and VX on the town of Halabja, killing more than 5,000 people and injuring thousands more. Many of the survivors suffered long-term medical complications, and thousands died. There have been significant instances of birth defects in children born to parents of Halabja, and many are still suffering from the effects of the attack.

In 1991, during the Shi'a uprising in the south, the regime brutally massacred tens of thousands of soldiers and civilians. Also in 1991, once Kurdish autonomy was declared, many Kurds living below the green line were massacred, leaving mass gravesites in the Kirkuk region. In 1991, with an uprising in Najaf, we saw again the demonstrated brutality of this regime. As it put down the uprising, many of the perpetrators were rounded up, were arrested, and many of the participants who were placed in jails were tortured.

The Marsh Arabs, whose people had lived for thousands of years in the longstanding Marsh Arab area, were forced to leave the land after it was no longer cultivable and habitable because the regime decided to divert their waters to other sources.

All Iraqis who opposed or questioned the leadership of Saddam Hussein, whether Shi'a, Sunni, Christian, Kurd, Turkoman, or other, were systematically intimidated, tortured, and executed during the regime.

We are now in a new chapter of the trial of Saddam Hussein. Many of these atrocities will come to light. As I mentioned earlier, I have a lot of faith in the Iraqi people, that they will conduct the trial in a responsible way following international law and also, in some instances, applying their local law.

The credit for freeing the Iraqi people I think goes to the men and women in the Armed Forces, it goes to the American people who have shown perseverance through this period of time, and also to our President, our great leader, who has demonstrated strong leadership not only in America but across the world in this fight for freedom. The real beneficiaries are going to be the Iraqi and the Afghani people.

I, along with many other Americans, will be watching as the trial runs its course. This is not going to be an American trial or any kind of world trial, although international procedures will be followed. But it will be a trial that will reflect the freedoms of the Iraqi people and reflect their form of justice.

I wish the Iraqi people well. I commend our President for a job very well done. Again, I want to recognize the sacrifice and commitment of our men and women in the military who have been so brave and forthright, and have done overall a great job in representing America on the battlefield in their fight for freedom.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia is recognized.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry: My understanding is the time at this point had been reserved for statements regarding the elections in Iraq. Am I correct? What is the time remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business time has now expired.

Mr. WARNER. I ask unanimous consent the time be extended for a period not to exceed 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, my distinguished colleague from Colorado has spoken very eloquently with regard to the elections in Iraq. I would like to add a few thoughts of my own, for it was truly a momentous event in the sense that a nation which had not had any government since 1920 was given the opportunity to begin its course toward joining the nations of the free world to have some form of democracy of their own choosing—and I underline that: Of their own choosing. They thereby take a place in the world with a responsibility for securing the basic freedoms people worldwide desire.

On Saturday, October 15, 2005, the Iraqi people, once again, following their historic election in January of

this year, took another significant step forward in Iraq. We saw millions of Iraqis indicate their willingness to embrace the democratic process by virtue of their voting. There was a strong turnout nationwide, a significantly higher turnout than we anticipated in certain areas. This turnout, particularly in the Sunni regions, is more remarkable because it was often in the face of insurgent intimidation.

We all observed three important signs of Iraqi progress in the events of October 15th. First, the electoral process proceeded as planned. Insurgent efforts to disrupt the elections that were attempted throughout the summer and right up to the elections simply did not succeed.

Second, Iraqi Government's outreach to Sunni leaders during the constitutional drafting process is having an effect. Prime Minister al-Jafari said, "The victory for Iraq is that Iraqis are voting."

Third, the Iraqi security forces provided protection to more than 6,000 polling sites. I cannot overstate the importance of that. The United States, together with its coalition partners, worked hard for some 2 years now to establish a military and a police force. I would say, having followed this very carefully in the Armed Services Committee, that significant progress has been made in the last 120 days. We have established criteria to assess the quality and the professional level attained by these individuals, and how best to integrate them in the overall security framework needed to preserve and protect the Iraqi people and preserve their sovereignty. Real progress has been made. The voting day was an example of how they perform. At the polling sites, security was primarily the responsibility of either the Iraqi police or the national forces. It was clear and visible that the Iraqis took the lead in this effort. No security incident appeared to affect voting. The level of security breaches was far below the high of some 300 breaches during the January election of this year. I believe there was less than 20 incidents total that tried to disrupt the election, but all failed to affect the casting of votes at these polling places.

We have no confirmed figures on the results yet. We, the world, await the outcome. Newspapers throughout the world carry reports of the importance of the election and saluting those who made it possible—not just the security forces but also the United Nations and other international organizations which came in and supervised this historic day. Basically the streets were calm. In some places there were mild celebrations.

Last month, for example, in Tall Afar in northern Iraq, coalition and Iraqi forces were engaged with insurgents for control of that city—a bitter battle. It is interesting that on Saturday the Independent Election Committee of Iraq estimated that 80 percent of the registered voters in that community

voted. Therefore we must praise the efforts of the Iraqis, the U.S. civilian and military personnel, all those of our coalition partners and those of international organizations for planning and executing an electoral referendum in such a challenging environment. The United Nations chief electoral adviser in Iraq said:

The process has gone so smoothly and well, from a technical point of view.

The Vice Chairman of the International Mission for Iraqi Elections, a coalition of electoral monitoring bodies, praised the referendum for its legal framework, planning, and logistics. Now the world will await the final result, due hopefully later this week. The Independent Electoral Commission in Iraq is supervising this process and will announce an official tally after votes are counted at a central location overseen by the United Nations election advisory team to ensure that international standards are being met.

There are, no doubt, difficult days remaining ahead. Generals Abizaid and Casey told the Congress, the American people, and indeed the whole world, just that in appearances throughout the United States last month. Both men were confident that we are moving in the right direction. We saw that progress this Saturday and we salute them for their leadership and their participation and their responsibility in achieving the results that came about on Saturday.

If the constitution is ratified, Iraqis will vote again on December 15. This time they will vote for a permanent government to take office on December 31. That leaves 60 days, basically, between now and December 15. It will be a very unusual period in the history of Iraq, in that many of those in this current government, the interim government, will be seeking office in that election. So we have to exercise a degree of patience as we watch them, as they pursue their political campaigns at the same time they have official duties to maintain a government and serve the needs of the people of Iraq—whether it is the power, whether it is the water, whether it is the security. All of those things must be maintained during this interregnum until the election takes place.

Then, following December 15 there is basically a 60-day period as established under the law that they have adopted. There is a 60-day period in which that government must replace the existing one and take the reins of authority and govern Iraq for a period of 4 years—truly a permanent government.

As this political situation matures, so too will the Iraqi security forces, and I am confident we will see a continued strong pace to obtain the needed numbers of trained police, border security, internal security, national guard, and a standing army to provide that nation with protection for its sovereignty and internal protection from the insurgents. With an Iraqi permanent government in place and steady

progress in these security forces, I see—and I want to say with great caution—an opportunity, following the first of the year, to begin to review our present force structure and to consider such options as will hopefully be available to lessen the size of our overall troop presence.

Watching Iraqis vote, we as Americans should be especially proud of the contributions of those men and women who proudly wear the uniform of the United States. When I speak with them in Iraq, as I did weeks ago on my sixth trip, and in Afghanistan, they know the importance of what they are doing.

I would like to underline that. Individually, they know and understand the importance of the mission which they, as members of the all-volunteer force of our military, have undertaken. Together with the commitments in support of their families back home, they are performing brilliantly in Iraq, Afghanistan, and all across the world, protecting the security of this Nation and the security of our principal allies.

We will continue to demand from these people as we always have, but they are like generations before them, answering a call to duty to defend the values and freedoms we cherish. We wish them well. We wish the blessings of the Almighty on them and their families. We have taken heavy casualties in this conflict, both in terms of lost lives and wounded. Not a day goes by that those who are privileged to serve in this Chamber do not have that foremost in their minds, as do most Americans.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The Journal clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

TRANSPORTATION, TREASURY, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, THE JUDICIARY, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3058, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3058) making appropriations for the Department of Transportation, Treasury, and Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, the District of Columbia, and independent agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Kennedy modified amendment No. 2063, to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank the Chair. I note that my partner and co-manager of the bill, the Senator from Washington, and I are here and ready to do business. We were ready to do business yesterday. We had one rollcall vote. There were more than 40 amendments filed yesterday. I know there are many others who have or are thinking about amendments. But we have enough work to do now if Members will come forward and offer their amendments that are filed or talk with us to see if they can be accepted.

We would like very much to move forward on this bill today, and perhaps complete work on it by 8 o'clock tonight when the baseball game is on television. But hope springs eternal. We would love to see Members come forward. I think more are ready to go.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2113

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Missouri [Mr. BOND] proposes an amendment numbered 2113.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: Limits the availability of funds under this Act for use in paying for eminent domain activities)

Insert the following on page 348, after line 5, and renumber accordingly:

“SEC. 321. No funds in this Act may be used to support any federal, state, or local projects that seek to use the power of eminent domain, unless eminent domain is employed only for a public use: Provided, That for purposes of this section, public use shall not be construed to include economic development that primarily benefits private entities: Provided further, That any use of funds for mass transit, railroad, airport, seaport or highway projects as well as utility projects which benefit or serve the general public (including energy-related, communication-related, water-related and wastewater-related infrastructure), other structures designated for use by the general public or which have other common-carrier or public-utility functions that serve the general public and are subject to regulation and oversight by the government, and projects for the removal of blight (including areas identified by units of local government for recovery from natural disasters) or brownfields as defined in the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act (Pub. Law 107-118) shall be considered a public use for purposes of eminent domain: Provided further, That the Government Accountability