

can be no greater example of being divorced from reality.

In a nation where voter turnout is a major issue, the New Hampshire primary has no such problem. Those casting aspersions on the democratic relevance of New Hampshire should look at their own states' turnout before denigrating others. Moreover, the state's primary provides for a greater show of grassroots democracy than caucuses do.

The proposals to add more early caucuses will only serve to exacerbate the problem of front loading.

But it is the nature of the primary that I believe will be the greatest loss to the nation's political and democratic culture. In a college here in the United Kingdom, I teach U.S. politics to students who receive their view of the U.S. political system from various media. Big money, stadium rallies and nonstop tarmac campaigns comprise the portrayal they are presented with.

That's until I tell them of New Hampshire—of town hall meetings, coffee klatches and earnest discussion, of living rooms and factory gates in the snow, of genuine democracy in action—the politics of people.

It is deeply ironic that in the week that saw the passing of Eugene McCarthy, the future of the New Hampshire primary is being challenged. His insurgent campaign in 1968 was a key factor in the democratization of the system of presidential selection.

It was only because of the unique character of New Hampshire, its people's desire for serious political dialogue and the democratic character of the state's primary that such a challenge proved to be possible.

Long may it continue. Looking forward to seeing you in '08, '12 and '16.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized for 7 minutes.

Mr. INHOFE. Repeat the time, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Seven minutes.

IRAQ

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I returned 2 days ago from Iraq. There was an article in yesterday's Hill magazine that was erroneous—there will be a correction printed—where they inaccurately stated the number of times I have been over to Iraq. It has actually been 10 times. I have been doing this not because I am a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, but because I believe it is our constitutional responsibility to see firsthand that our guys over there are getting the equipment they need to prosecute the war, and they have been.

I want to share with you what happened the first of this week because even though the vote took place yesterday, on Thursday, the vote for the Iraqi security forces actually took place on Monday and Tuesday. We had a chance to go up there and visit with them.

The interesting point is, we saw this coming. There have been a lot of politicians coming back and talking about how bad things are over there. I can't figure out where they get their information because as we have been approaching these elections over the last few months, we have noticed the IED incidents have been down 30 percent

and suicide bombs have been down 70 percent.

There is a road that goes from where we get off the C-130s to go into the Green Zone. Mr. President, you have been there. We were averaging about 10 terrorist incidents on that road each week up until June. We haven't had one since June. So we see all these good things are happening, and then the unexpected quality of the training we are getting for the Iraqi security forces. These guys right now—and I think this is significant because people keep asking, What is the exit strategy? I can tell you what I believe. One Senator believes we are going to be out.

Right now there are 214,000 Iraqi soldiers who are trained and equipped. At the end of this month, while we are drawing down—we are drawing down probably 15,000 to 20,000 of ours troops—they are going to increase to 220,000. By the end of 2006, it is anticipated they will be at 300,000. The goal is to get 10 divisions of Iraqi security forces. Ten divisions of Iraqi security forces equal 325,000 troops. That will happen by July of 2007.

In terms of the way we are functioning now, we will be out of there, but there will still be some troops there. We still have troops in Kosovo and in Bosnia, but the heavy lifting will be over. They will be taking care of themselves.

I see the incredible courage of these people. Up in Fallujah 3 nights ago, I had all of the Iraqi security forces that had voted that day come in. They were all rejoicing, and I said to them—this is kind of funny. I said to them, through an interpreter: When is it going to be that you are going to be able to be on your own without our support? Is that going to be in the near future?

And they said: No, no—which broke my heart when I heard this. Then I found out, in the Iraqi language, "yes" means "na'am." So they are saying, "Yes, yes," and when they shake their head this way, it also means "yes." Anyway, a little advice in case that happens to anyone.

These people are ready. They are so proud of the level of training they have had. Keep in mind, this is in the Sunni triangle. These are the Sunnis who are supposed to dislike us.

Several weeks ago, I was there and I met General Mahdi, who is in charge of the Iraqi security forces in Fallujah. He had been in charge—under Saddam Hussein he was a brigade commander. He hated Americans until he started working with the Marines. He said he learned to love the Marines so much that when they rotated them out, they all got together and they cried. That guy right now, General Mahdi, is now over the eastern one-third of the entire city of Baghdad. We do not have our military there. It is all under Iraqi security. We have half of the city under security now. It is going to be up to 75 percent in a very short period of time.

I think, when we see the successes—and even if that were not true, if one

stops and realizes the bloody regime of Saddam Hussein, yes, the targets for the terrorists right now are not Americans, they are Iraqis, and they are killing some of the Iraqis, but when one stops and puts it on a chart, during the 10 years that Saddam Hussein had his bloody regime, on a monthly basis he was torturing to death more people than the terrorists are killing today. When one looks at the way that they have done it, the forms of torture, include gouging out of eyes, severe beatings, electric shocks—there is a testimonial here about a 3-month-old baby girl who was taken, and they gouged her eyes out in front of the father, smashed her head and broke it open against a concrete wall.

There is a lot of talk on the other side of this issue about prisoner abuse. We do not have prisoner abuse. The documentation is right here about what they do with their prisoners. They will put them in shredders. If they are lucky, they will shred their head first. If they are unlucky, they will put their feet in there. This is what has been happening over there, but it is all over now, and they are in charge of their own destiny.

I have enjoyed so much visiting with the members of Parliament who were going to be up for election. This would have been on Wednesday, and they were going to be up the next day. One lady was quite outspoken and quite negative in terms of what her people were saying to her. I said: Did it ever occur to you 5 years ago that there would be an opportunity for a woman to serve in Parliament, let alone to talk the way you are talking? She stopped and said: You know, I think that is right.

So we are seeing such a change now in the attitudes. The polls look so good. The polls are showing that 70 percent of the people in Iraq are appreciative of the Americans being there. They want them to stay and get out when they are able to stand up on their own.

I met with the election commission, and to handle the election the way they did was totally unprecedented. We could never have predicted how smoothly things would go. We talked to the people, and I want to particularly pay tribute to IFES, the International Foundation of Electrical Systems. They have done a great job. They had people on the ground, and they have truly been able to conduct an election that is actually comparable and better than many other mature countries, maturing democracies. It has been a great success. I am rejoicing with all the people of Iraq today and with the people of America.

Lastly, I pay tribute to the brave people of Iraq who for the third time this year have gone to the polls in record number to vote for a brighter and more democratic future in Iraq. The early reports indicate that across the 18 provinces of Iraq, Iraqis again turned out in massive numbers to vote

in favor of a democratic Iraq. In doing so the Iraqis demonstrated to us all the importance of voting.

Earlier this week I was in Iraq and had the opportunity to see first hand the preparations for the historic election on December 15. I even had a chance to witness some of the early voting that took place in Iraq. It was a moving experience and one that demonstrated that the great sacrifice that America has made in Iraq helped to free people from tyranny and start them on the road to a democratic future.

While in Baghdad, I met with the Chairman of the Independent Election Commission of Iraq, IECI, Isadin Al Mohamaady and the members of the commission. I had an opportunity to see first hand the extensive preparations that were being undertaken by the Iraqis. I was impressed by the sacrifice made by the members of the commission and their staff, many of whom have paid the ultimate price for democracy with their lives. However, the spirit that I found in Baghdad, Fallujah, and everywhere I went, was one of determination, professionalism, and a dedication to making sure that Iraqis could freely select their future leaders at the ballot box.

It is important also to recognize the work of the International Foundation for Election Systems also known as IFES that has played a critical role in helping advance free and fair elections in Iraq and in 120 countries around the world. With the support of U.S. taxpayers, IFES was able to provide critical assistance that helped to make these elections possible.

I stand here to salute the brave Iraqis who at great personal risk sent an important message to the world about the triumph of the ballot over the bullet. Iraqis of all ethnic groups have joined together with unity and determination to freely choose their leaders in a free and fair election. They have sent a message around the world that the best way to defeat tyranny is at the ballot box, the source of power of the people, by the people and for the people.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

The Senator from Mississippi.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 4440

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I have a unanimous consent request that we have been working on, and I think we are ready to go with. We would like to get that done before we go to the hour of debate on the PATRIOT Act. I wish to see if we can confirm that with the minority.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I object.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, could I inquire what the anticipated time is on

when we could get this done? I know the Democratic leader has indicated we are very close and should be able to get this done momentarily. Do we have any information on that?

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, my understanding is that colleagues are working to clear this continued Katrina tax relief issue and that there is progress being made. That is the reason we are objecting. As soon as we can get it cleared, we will interrupt what we are doing to take it up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I must say my patience is wearing thin. I have been going through this for several days now and have been assured by the Democratic leader himself that we would get this done this morning. I am expecting that to occur. I am going to be standing right here waiting for that signal from the Democratic leader.

The people of the area that have been damaged by Hurricane Katrina cannot wait any longer. I expect this to be done momentarily, and if it is not, there is going to be hell to pay this day.

I yield the floor.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

NATIONAL BORDER NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, yesterday I introduced S. 2117, which is a bill engaging our Nation to fight concerning our right to control entry. It is legislation that covers many aspects of the problem we are having on our very porous borders. One part of this is utilizing retired law enforcement officers. As many people know, national law enforcement officers have to retire at age 57. We learned of their availability after 9/11 when the Transportation Safety Administration and our office was inundated with calls from these brave law enforcement officers who are retired, saying that they wanted to participate in this activity, and they are willing to do it for costs. The legislation I have introduced does include the very sophisticated type of a fence that goes along the border between Mexico and the United States and also with an army of people who can join those who have already demonstrated very clearly that if we have enough people down there, we will be able to secure our borders.

I am cautioning any of our colleagues who are concerned about this issue not to be tempted to use military because right now our military is stressed. We have an OPTEMPO that is unacceptable as it is right now. It should not be taking on other duties. Besides that, with the enactment of S. 2117, that would not be necessary.

Illegal immigration is at an all-time high, with around 1 million illegal aliens infiltrating our borders each year.

My legislation focuses on empowering our citizens and law enforcement

officers to fight this flood of illegal immigration.

First of all, I want to make it clear that I honor the millions of immigrants that have come to this Nation, waited their turn, and gone through all the requirements to become American citizens to make our great country what it is today. I have spoken at many naturalization services and seen what these people have gone through to become American citizens.

I agree with the 1997 U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform that measured, legal immigration has "led" to create one of the world's greatest "multiethnic nations."

I also agree with the Commission that immigrants who are "Americanized" help cultivate a shared commitment to "liberty, democracy and equal opportunity" in our Nation. However, I cannot stand idly by and watch this great Nation collapse under the pressure of uncontrolled illegal immigration.

Roy Beck, Executive Director of Numbers USA, a non-profit organization dedicated to immigration reform, stated that "a presence of 8 to 11 million illegal aliens in this country is a sign that this country has lost control of its borders and the ability to determine who is a member of this national community . . . a country that has lost that ability increasingly loses its ability to determine the rules of its society—environmental protections, labor protections, health protections, safety protections."

Beck goes on to say, "In fact, a country that cannot keep illegal immigration to a low level quickly ceases to be a real country, or a real community. Rather than being self-governed, such a country begins to have its destiny largely determined by citizens of other countries who manage to move in illegally."

My bill, the ENFORCE Act, works to solve the illegal immigration problem in several ways. It will provide a way for more civilians and retired law enforcement officers to help the Border Patrol in stopping illegal border crossings and reduce the illegal immigration rate.

Through the creation of the National Border Neighborhood Watch Program, NBNW, retired law enforcement officials called the Border Regiment Assisting in Valuable Enforcement, BRAVE, Force agents, will come and work alongside Border Patrol agents. Civilian volunteers, much like the now well-known Minutemen, will be able to report immigration violations to assigned BRAVE Force agents.

The NBNW Program is modeled after the National Neighborhood Watch program, a collaboration between law enforcement, businesses, and concerned citizens who watch for and report suspicious criminal activity in neighborhoods to the local police.

The Neighborhood Watch Program has proven effective in reducing the crime rate in areas where it is implemented. I am hopeful that the National