

Clearly, Condoleezza Rice is eminently qualified for the post of Secretary of State. I know many of my colleagues are aware of her years at Stanford University, including her service as provost. In addition, she served on the National Security Council during George H. W. Bush's administration as Director of Soviet and Eastern European Affairs, which witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall. She has come full circle since then and again served on the National Security Council but this time as the national security adviser to our current President and has done a magnificent job during very turbulent times.

Since then, Dr. Rice has consistently provided the President with sound advice on national security and foreign policy. She has been balanced, fair, and determined to ensure that President Bush received the best possible advice.

Some have questioned Dr. Rice's role as national security adviser and how she shaped the Bush administration's policies since the tragedy of September 11, 2001—specifically, our action against the Saddam Hussein regime. I believe she was instrumental in encouraging the President to utilize every diplomatic approach possible. We should not forget that President Bush went to the United Nations, secured a Security Council resolution demanding disarmament, and worked with our closest allies to ensure that Saddam Hussein complied with his obligations. The President also sought authorization from this Congress, which over three-quarters of this body supported. Unfortunately, Saddam Hussein would not keep his end of the bargain and we were left with no choice but military action. I am thankful during this turbulent period that Dr. Rice ensured the President received advice from multiple viewpoints so he could make the bold decisions necessary for our security.

The Hussein regime is now out of power. The former dictator and killer of thousands is sitting in prison and the first democratic elections in Iraq are about to take place. Our Nation is more secure because a dangerous regime, with a history of aggression and links to terrorist organizations, is no longer in power.

Today, America has demonstrated its resolve in the global war on terror. American troops and their coalition allies have achieved this historic effort thanks to their sacrifice.

As democracy in Iraq succeeds, a message will be sent forth that freedom can be the future of every nation and that freedom improves the peace and security of the United States.

I am certain Dr. Rice will present this powerful message abroad with skill and determination. Just as importantly, Dr. Rice understands that successfully fighting the war on terror is not solely a military task. Dr. Rice will seek to use our powerful diplomatic leverage to better protect our Nation. She will also guide our Na-

tion's diplomatic efforts to solve regional and civil conflicts in the Middle East, between Israel and its Arab neighbors, in Sudan, Congo, and Liberia, in the Balkans, in Cyprus, in Haiti, in Northern Ireland, and elsewhere. Her leadership in the important multilateral discussions with the North Koreans on their pursuit for weapons of mass destruction will be pivotal.

There are also other challenges which Dr. Rice must tackle with our social and economic development programs that the State Department manages. The promotion of free trade and investment worldwide, the fight against HIV/AIDS, and the implementation of the Millennium Challenge Account are but a few ways we can seek to provide our friends and allies around the globe with much needed stability and vitality.

When the President announced his intention to nominate Dr. Rice to be Secretary of State, he spoke of relying on her counsel, benefiting from her experience, and appreciating her sound and steady judgment. I am pleased that the President has sought to replace our current Secretary of State, Colin Powell, with another so well equipped for the challenges that lie ahead.

I would be remiss if I did not thank Secretary Powell for his service to our great Nation. He has given so much of himself while serving during his long and distinguished military career before finally leading the Department of State. These two Americans are two of our best. We are privileged that while Secretary Powell steps down to pursue new challenges, the United States has someone of Dr. Rice's credentials to continue to carry the torch of liberty abroad.

I urge my colleagues to confirm Condoleezza Rice as our 66th Secretary of State.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF AUSCHWITZ

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, historians Will and Ariel Durant have told us, "The present is the past rolled up for action and the past is the present unrolled for understanding." In our search for understanding and guidance for our actions, we are pausing today to commemorate one of the darkest moments of modern history, the Nazi Holocaust, the effort by the Nazi regime to exterminate the Jewish people. Six million Jews were sent to their death before the end of the death camps. Sixty years ago today, the Auschwitz death camp was liberated,

bringing an end to the slaughter of well over 1 million people at that location alone. As unfathomable as that reality is, we need to seek to understand it in order to prevent it. I am not sure if we can ever truly understand it.

In some ways it is kind of bizarre, but we need to understand that while genocide in Germany, Cambodia, Rwanda, and elsewhere may end up as a kind of mass insanity in some almost bizarre way, it begins in a terribly misplaced idealism.

The Khmer Rouge thought that returning Cambodia to its rural beginnings was the way to create a good society. They became so convinced that modernity was destroying their people that they attempted to forcibly empty the cities and kill anyone with a professional degree or anyone who even wore glasses. They even kept careful records of those they killed because they assumed history would honor them for their actions. The Germans kept records, too. It is difficult for me to fathom they would believe that history would honor them for their actions.

The situation in Rwanda dates back to the colonial period, when European colonial powers favored Tutsis over Hutus. When independence was hastily granted and the Europeans departed, a seesaw of vengeance and reprisals began, which escalated unchecked for 30 years. When historic anger boiled over, with the failure of the international community to step in, a terrible period of violence claimed over half a million people.

The fact that genocide could happen in an industrialized, cultured nation that had produced Beethoven and Goethe is especially chilling. As we read the various accounts of what was happening in the Third Reich, it astounds us that people could come to such conclusions. It astounds us that so many good people could do nothing, did nothing. While millions were slaughtered, they turned their backs and shut their eyes.

Auschwitz was not conceived as a death camp. It was part of Hitler's and Albert Speer's master plans for bold new Nazi "Cities of the East" that would express their vision for society. Such projects required slave labor for which Jews and others were likely candidates. The rise of democratic socialism in Germany was in part a reaction to their hatred of communism in the Soviet Union. So they had a strategy to empty the lands of Poland and Russia for resettlement by an expanded Germany. Such was their grandiosity that human beings became objects to be used for their plans and obstacles to be destroyed. They dehumanized the Jewish people.

The lessons of these three examples is: Hatred combined with any number of other circumstances can explode into genocide. Even as the situations in Darfur and elsewhere continue, we would be naive and foolish to believe that mankind has "learned its lesson."

First, we need to go on the moral offensive whenever hatred arises. That is why I have risen on the floor several times to decry the growth of antisemitism in Europe. Even on American college campuses, antisemitism is raising its ugly head today. We need to speak out. We need to put a cork in the bottle. We need to make sure it does not spread.

Second, I think we need to understand that with American power comes responsibility. In concert with our allies in the U.N., we must be prepared to intervene when we can to prevent bad situations from going over the abyss into genocide. Diplomacy is by its nature slow and cautious while situations such as these are fast moving and can degenerate overnight. We need to find ways to respond quickly. The history of the quick action of the British in 1941 to stop the Farhud, a genocidal program against Iraqi Jews, is an event deserving more attention and more study.

There is one other reason for us to focus on these monstrously evil events. They provide stirring examples of the nobility and resiliency of human beings as well: The story of "Schindler's List", the compassionate soldiers who liberated the concentration camps. Soviet troops liberated Auschwitz on January 27, 1945, and were able to save about 7,000 prisoners from certain death. The stories of surviving prisoners themselves are remarkable. Those who managed to maintain their humanity in the most inhumane of circumstances inspired us all.

Victor Frankl offered this recollection:

We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.

Frankl also wrote:

A thought transfixed me: for the first time in my life I saw the truth as it is set into song by so many poets, proclaimed as the final truth by so many thinkers. The truth that love is the ultimate and highest goal to which man can aspire. Then I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that human poetry and human thought and belief have to impart: The salvation of man is through love and in love.

The Holocaust and similar events discourage us with the realization of the extent of evil of which people are capable, and we must guard against it vigilantly. But they also display the highest and best human beings can rise to, which gives us courage and hope.

We will never, ever forget man's inhumanity to man in the Holocaust. We reflect on the liberation of Auschwitz, so we assure that we never forget. But at the same time we have a sense of courage and hope that in the worst of circumstances man can still turn to love and to faith and to salvation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, how much time do we have on our side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 11 minutes 50 seconds remaining.

NOMINATION OF CONDOLEEZZA RICE

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, as most of today's program will be based on Condoleezza Rice and her appointment to be Secretary of State, I rise to make some comments to show my admiration for Ms. Rice and my support for her to serve in this task. I certainly cannot think of a better candidate. I rise to offer my strong support for Dr. Rice because I believe she not only brings a remarkable record of public service and academic credentials to this position, but also great experience and integrity in troubled times, times of war.

I find it troublesome that we are here today, unfortunately, not so much to debate the qualifications of Dr. Rice, even though they are certainly impressive and she is equal to the task. Instead, to some extent we have chosen to return, at this time, to the honored position of trying to score political points by distorting the record of the President's decision to use force in Iraq. The ongoing operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan are critical components to the global war on terrorism, a war with the purpose of fundamentally changing the environment which has given rise to the power of the extremists in that part of the world. It remains an aggressive effort, not only to bring to justice the perpetrators of 9/11 but also the nations that aid and support them.

There has been a great deal of discussion, of course, with Dr. Rice about the facts that brought us into Iraq. The fact is, at that time everyone involved—whether it was the United States, whether it was Britain, whether it was the CIA—had this view of what the world was and that is what it was based on. Some of those views turned out not to be correct, but at the time that was the information we had.

So I certainly hope we can move forward here. I agree, everyone should have a right to say what they choose with regard to these nominations. On the other hand, they ought to be here for the purpose of examining those persons for that task, and not talking about the politics of all the surrounding issues.

I also have to say I am not at all surprised that someone nominated to serving on the Cabinet would be supportive of the President. If you were President, would you appoint people who disagreed with you and would not be with you, who would not support your positions? Of course not. So that is where we are.

At any rate, I support the decision to use force, supporting the action in Iraq today. We have to finish our work

there. I think we are offering freedom and hope to the people of these poor and oppressed countries. The best way is to neutralize the effect of fanatical Islam. We continue to make progress with other nations, and that is great.

Dr. Rice has performed admirably in her role as National Security Adviser and will continue to serve the country well as Secretary of State. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this nomination today and move it on down the line.

ISSUES FACING THE SENATE

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I also wish to take a few minutes, as others have, to talk about some of the issues that will be before us. We have a great opportunity now to move forward on these issues, many of which we have discussed in the last session. Many are ready to be acted upon, and I hope we can do that.

We need to talk about taxes and simplifying taxes. We need to talk about ensuring that we have the tax support there to create jobs and strengthen the economy. We seem to be moving in the right direction. I think the tax reductions have proven themselves to be useful, but many of them, particularly on taxes such as the estate tax, unless that is made permanent so people can have confidence in their investments, they really do not fully do what we hoped they would do.

We need to continue to work to keep America safe; security is probably our top priority. We have made a considerable amount of change in that area. We need to continue to evaluate that, of course, and ensure that we have the best.

I hope we can come back to deal with the issue of energy—clean, economic energy. That is, again, one of the basic issues in creating jobs, in growing an economy, and one that we have worked on now for several years.

We had a long meeting yesterday. We had a series of meetings to talk about the need for conservation, to talk about the need for efficiency. We talked about the need for alternative sources of energy—renewable energy as well as domestic production. Those things are so important. Yet, somehow, we have not been able to move forward. I cannot think of anything that is more important to us than to have a policy with respect to the future, to be able to look into the future with regard to energy.

I suspect most of my friends here would agree that as they go home and meet with people, one of the issues that is most often talked about is the cost of health care. It is a tough issue. I think we have a good health care system, probably the best in the world, but we are getting to the point where access to that system is being limited by the cost. I am not just talking about Medicare or Medicaid; I am talking about health care generally. I am talking about families on the ranch,