

These are very serious challenges, and we are witnessing these challenges right now.

Let us be blunt. There is always the possibility that a murderous dictator can come to power in a democracy. That is how Hitler got in, in Germany. No one said this approach is perfect. It isn't, especially when Hamas wins in Palestine. But democracy isn't supposed to be perfect or easy or smooth. It was not such as we set up our Government.

But what is the alternative to promoting democracy, no matter how great the challenges become? I submit there is no viable alternative. It is democracy, and only democracy, that will offer these countries the possibility of greater civic freedoms, greater economic freedoms, and the hope for a politically moderate future.

It is only because of American leadership, our brave soldiers, our brave civilians, and the hopeful leadership, the enlightened leadership of people such as Hamid Karzai, Jalal Talabani, and Saad Hariiri that these countries and their people stand a chance of a better life and the world stands a chance to be a safer place. Along with it, America stands a chance of having important friends in a part of the world that in the past has been no friend to America.

Some of my colleagues have said we need to get out of Iraq. I agree—as soon as we train the Iraqi military and the police to ensure security but not until that is done.

But even when Iraq is stabilized, we will continue to see the threat of violence from the Islamofascists such as al-Qaida, Ansar al-Islam, Jamia Islamia.

As President Bush warned, this is going to be a decade-long war. Thus, our battles will go on overseas to deny foreign safe havens to murderous terrorist groups.

At home, the threat is still grim. And with recent disclosures, regrettably, of our most sensitive intelligence, according to CIA Director Porter Goss, we have experienced very severe damage to our capabilities.

It is even more important now that we provide our domestic law enforcement agencies the tools they need. That is why it is imperative we pass the PATRIOT Act as soon as possible. It is past time that we do so. 9/11 was not so long ago that we should have forgotten what it felt like that day.

You know and I know what it was like. We all need to remember. The results of hamstringing our domestic intelligence abilities are not so distant. The reasons we passed the PATRIOT Act have not gone away.

I am glad that an overwhelming number of Senators will join together to provide our terror fighters with the tools they need. For those for whom this was a hard decision, I applaud your courage. However, our actions pale in comparison to the courage exercised by those of us who protect us every day. It is to them we give these

tools, to them we entrust our safety, to them we owe our freedoms, to them we owe our lives.

Why would we not give them the tools they need to hold terror at bay? Why should we slow their hunt for terror suspects here at home? Why would we take from them the tools that have aided in the capture of over 400 terrorist suspects?

Renewing the PATRIOT Act will do this and more. It strikes a balance between national security and personal liberties. In the words of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, it is a better bill now than it was before.

Negotiators have addressed many concerns. A balance has been struck on national security letters. Nondisclosure requirements prevent terrorists from learning the progress of investigations and investigative techniques. New language allows recipients of NSL letters to overturn the nondisclosure requirements, if a judge finds there is no reason to believe that disclosures may endanger the national security of the United States, interfere with criminal, counterterrorism or counterintelligence investigation, interfere with diplomatic relations or endanger the life or physical safety of any person.

Could we allow anything else?

Language was added clarifying that libraries, where functioning in their traditional roles, are not subject to national security letters. The agreement removes the requirement that a person inform the FBI of the identity of any attorney to whom disclosure was made or will be made to obtain legal advice or assistance.

For those of us who care about port security—quite a few people have been talking about it—this legislation includes the Reducing Crime and Terrorism at America's Seaports Act of 2005.

Those who join me in supporting this measure will make it a Federal crime to use fraud or false pretenses to enter America's ports; establish a new, general Federal crime to interfere forcibly with inspections of vessels by Federal law enforcement or resist arrest or provide law enforcement officers with false information; add "passenger vessels" to the forms of mass transit protected against terrorist attacks under Federal law; make it a Federal crime to place any substance or device in the navigable waters of the United States with the intent to damage a vessel or its cargo or to interfere with maritime commerce; and make it a Federal crime to transport explosives, biological, chemical, radioactive weapons or nuclear material aboard a vessel in the United States, in waters subject to U.S. jurisdiction on the high seas or aboard a vessel of the United States.

In addition, I care very deeply about fighting the drug scourge sweeping rural America, especially in the Midwest. Folks in my State know all too well that methamphetamine is perhaps the most deadly, fiercely addictive, and rapidly spreading drug the United

States has known. It is cheap, potent, and available everywhere.

During the past decade, while law enforcement officers continue to bust record numbers of clandestine labs, methamphetamine use in some communities has increased by as much as 300 percent.

The PATRIOT Act reauthorization includes the most comprehensive antimeth package ever introduced in the Congress by my colleagues Senator JIM TALENT of Missouri and Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN of California. This Combat Meth Act will make certain legitimate consumers have access to the medicine they need while cutting off the meth cooks from the large amounts of ingredients they need to cook meth.

For all of these reasons, we must reauthorize the PATRIOT Act now. Our terror fighters cannot wait, our ports cannot wait, and our communities suffering from the scourge of meth cannot wait.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

MILITARY RECRUITERS

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I rise to speak about a very important issue—access for our military recruiters on our high school campuses.

Later today, I will introduce a resolution in support of our military recruiters.

I rise and stand here today in a country free from tyranny, free from dictatorship, and free from oppression. I stand here today protected by the rights that are guaranteed to me by the Constitution of the United States. I am free to stand here because I am protected by the men and women of our nation's Armed Forces. It is because of our Nation's military that I enjoy the freedoms that are laid out in our country's Constitution.

These freedoms are enjoyed by every citizen of this great country.

The No Child Left Behind Act contains a provision that provides military recruiters and college and university recruiters with access to some student information. The intent behind this provision was to ensure that military recruiters were put on a level playing field with recruiters from our Nation's colleges and universities. At the time this language was included in NCLB military recruiters across the country were being denied access to student information that college and university recruiters were given full access to.

The text contained in No Child Left Behind is very simple. It states that "each local educational agency receiving assistance under this Act shall provide, on a request made by military recruiters or an institution of higher education, access to secondary school students' names, addresses, and telephone listings."

Recently, there have been numerous news reports on this topic. The debate

has swirled around a provision also in NCLB that allows a student or parent to request that contact information not be released to recruiters. School districts are required to inform parents and students that they have the option to make this request.

In some areas the debate on this provision has gone much further. The city of San Francisco recently voted in favor of Measure I, a symbolic measure that opposes, but does not forbid, military recruiting on public high school or college campuses. The city cannot forbid military recruiting at public high schools as doing so would put the schools at risk of losing all federal funding. I cannot fathom why the city passed this Measure. Students in San Francisco should have access to the same information that all other students have, and should be allowed to hear what the military has to offer them.

I understand the concerns surrounding privacy of personal information in today's society. However, I find it appalling that people have taken this provision and used it to rally against our troops, against our military system, and against our President.

We are here today because we are secured by the presence of our military that protects our freedoms. My question is why are we so frightened by the very instrument that helps keep us free?

Service in our armed forces is 100 percent voluntary and has been since the end of the Vietnam War. In order to maintain a voluntary force, the services must offer incentives to allow them to compete with the private sector for young, bright students about to graduate from high school. Recruiters search for the best and the brightest in our Nation's high schools to keep our forces strong and able to fight the forces that are against our way of life.

In the last 30 years, millions of young Americans have been given technical skills, received money for college tuition and preferred loans for first-time home purchases by choosing to serve in our military. Not only are these young soldiers given skills that can lead them to future employment, they are also given unique leadership training. Our military trains leaders not just for war, but for success in life.

Yet, it is perplexing to me that many parents today seem to look at military service as being akin to joining a radical cult or a violent gang. Military recruiters are going to our Nation's high schools to inform high school students of the opportunities that are available in our Armed Forces. Military recruiters are on campuses to provide information to students that is often not available in the mainstream media or in many high school counseling offices. Military recruiters are on high school campuses to dispel the many myths that surround service opportunities in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines and Coast Guard.

Some parents are concerned about reports of recruiter abuse. In fact, following televised reports of recruiter abuse, the U.S. Army stopped recruiting activities for one day to review procedures that its 7,500 recruiters use.

In one case the network reported a recruiter suggesting how a volunteer might cheat to pass a drug test, and in another, a sergeant threatened a prospect with arrest if he didn't report to a recruiting station. Two cases out of 7,500 Army recruiters operating out of some 1,700 recruiting stations nationwide prompted the Army to stand down, to refocus recruiters on their mission, reinforcing the Army's core values, and ensure its procedures were carried out consistently at all recruiting stations. It sounds like a pretty responsible reaction to me. It sounds like an institution concerned about doing things the right way.

We must not forget the brave young men and women who do sign up for a tour of duty with the military. They swear to uphold and to protect the Constitution. We must not forget they take that duty seriously. They protect each and every one of us from outside threats, not just threats of violence but also threats to our constitutionally protected freedoms of speech and religion.

In his book "The Greatest Generation," Tom Brokaw recounts a generation of Americans who sacrificed all they had to preserve our freedoms. Young men even went so far as to lie about their age so they could enjoy the honor of fighting for our country in World War II. Their country needed them, and they responded with uncommon valor and courage. The crucible of war formed who we are as a country today. Today, our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines stand on the shoulders of those warriors. We celebrate their accomplishments in movies and books. We regale them with the honors they earned and deserve. I wonder what sort of message we are sending to today's youth if we honor the soldiers of yesterday but shun the soldiers of today.

My fear is that freedom is becoming almost too free, too entitled to more and more Americans. As long as we are free to switch cell phone service or download music from any Web site, we believe our freedoms are intact. But freedom is about so much more than that. Freedom is having the ability to speak our mind and stand for what we believe. Freedom means having the right to publicly disagree with the decisions of elected leaders. Freedom is a right, but it comes with a responsibility.

As a parent, I have the direct responsibility to teach my children about the honor in serving our fellow man, our community, and in serving our country. As parents, from the time our children are born, we worry about their health, the friends they keep, the decisions they make, and the grades they bring home from school. We worry

about drugs, letting them drive, and about preparing them for a life after mom and dad. But when we shield young adults from the things that scare us as parents, we belittle our children. It is our responsibility to share the world with our children, in many cases, the good with the bad. It is our responsibility to instill in them a sense of pride in our country and in the freedom we enjoy.

We cannot shield our children from information about military service because in doing so, we underestimate our children's capacity to judge for themselves what their future should be. It is vital that our young adults in high school have access not only to future employment and educational opportunities but also to the opportunities provided in the U.S. military. And most importantly, it is absolutely necessary that our Nation's military have the opportunity to recruit the best and the brightest our Nation has to offer. If we continue to discriminate against our military recruiters, we risk undermining the well-being of our military. We risk fracturing the base on which our Army, our Navy, our Air Force and our Marines is built. It is vital that recruiters have access to our Nation's young adults to continue the traditions of our Armed Forces.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. I inform the Senator from Florida that there is approximately 8 minutes remaining of the time reserved for the majority leader; there is 30 minutes reserved for the Democratic leader. The Senator may request to speak out of turn and have his time allocated toward the Democratic leader's time.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I ask unanimous consent to do so.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Florida is recognized.

CONFISCATION OF SENIORS' PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I share with the Senate that there have been a couple of occurrences in Florida over the course of this recess that might be worth noting.

The first is, seniors were assured by the Food and Drug Administration 2 years ago that our senior citizens would not be harassed by the confiscation of their prescription drugs when they order those prescriptions by the Internet or by mail from Canada for a limited supply. The Food and Drug Administration assured me that the overall intent of the law was to stop the massive purchases of drugs out of State in which they would go on the black market, but that for senior citizens