

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader is recognized.

PROGRESS TOWARD A PERMANENT IRAQI GOVERNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, freedom took another important step forward this past Saturday in Iraq. Last December, we witnessed millions of free and brave Iraqi citizens defy the terrorist death threats and go to the polls to elect a parliament. Since that election, Iraqi political leaders have been hard at work forging a government that reflects the will of the Iraqi people.

This Saturday—unfortunately, it took a while to get there—we were finally able to celebrate the good news. Iraqis have made major progress toward achieving the goal of having a government in place. Iraqi political leaders reached an important agreement for the top leadership post for a national unity government.

Iraq will retain the experienced hand of Jalal Talabani as President, and the new Prime Minister Jawad al-Maliki appears to be a reformer, respected by all sides, who will hopefully have the credibility and the authority to shape a strong government with the power to take on the major issues facing that country.

The new Iraqi leadership has the will of the people at its back. They understand that democracy requires the courage to reach consensus. Over the next 30 days, they must fill the remaining slots of the cabinet and begin to address the challenges that grip that country.

Freedom and stability in Iraq is bad news for the terrorists. A stable, strong Iraq will unite its people against continued violence. A stable, strong Iraq will be an ally in the war on terror and a beacon of democracy in the Middle East. A stable, strong Iraq that cracks down on the terrorists in its midst will make the region and the world more secure.

Aside from the Iraqis themselves, much credit for this triumph in Iraq goes to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Her skillful diplomacy appears to have been a crucial ingredient in breaking the logjam.

Much credit also goes to our U.S. Ambassador there, Zalmay Khalilzad, for his tireless efforts. And, of course, President Bush's continuing resolve to defy terrorism and terrorist-friendly regimes and to support freedom and democracy has inspired and strengthened everyone in the process.

As we celebrate the victory in Iraq, we are mindful that much hard work certainly lies ahead. Terrorist violence in Iraq continues. Some say the momentum from the three successful elections of last year each one drawing greater levels of turnout than the one before has been squandered with the last 4 months of political bickering. The new Iraq leaders must be sure not

to squander any more by failing to assemble a government in a timely manner.

Although we are cautious, I think we should also be optimistic. America will continue to stand beside Iraq in the days ahead. I remind anyone who thinks this new government took too long to form that America also had a rocky start at its beginning. People forget that from the Declaration of Independence to the Constitution was 11 years, and from the Declaration of Independence until George Washington actually took office was 13 years.

Freedom, however, is worth the wait. The incoming Prime Minister appears to understand that he must form a consensus government, one that must reach out to Iraq's many ethnic and religious groups as his country begins its journey of democracy.

I was heartened by the promise he made this weekend. Here is what he had to say. He said:

We are going to form a family that will not be based on sectarian or ethnic backgrounds. . . . Those who take responsibility in the new government will be representing the people, not their parties.

The new Prime Minister, al-Maliki, has the right attitude, and that attitude should continue to guide the new government in the days ahead.

I know my colleagues will join me in congratulating the people of Iraq for spurning the terrorists and continuing down the road to democracy.

Most of all, I wish to express my profound gratitude for our troops in Iraq. It has been their strength and courage that has made progress on the road to freedom possible.

HEAD START IN MONTANA

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, each year since 1988, April 21 has been designated as Youth Service Day. This day is especially important for a group of Montanans in Billings, MT, who have been working with children since 1966. On April 21, the staff of Head Start, Inc. in Billings celebrated their 40th anniversary. I rise today to congratulate them on their past efforts and to express my support for another 40 years of service.

We have all seen the positive impact that Head Start has on children and families throughout Montana. This Federal program provides child and family development services by helping children under the age of 5 to develop the skills they will use throughout their formal education and for the rest of their lives. Head Start in Billings was recently recognized as among the top 2 percent of Head Start programs nationwide. Their continued dedication to excellence is deserving of recognition and praise, and I am honored to rise on their behalf.

While celebrating this milestone of service to Montana, these dedicated staff members recognized a very special volunteer named Thelma Adolph. Thelma, who volunteers through Head Start's Foster Grandparents program,

has given her time for 20 straight years. She has touched the lives of countless children, and it is no exaggeration to say that the world is a better place because of her. Such dedication is all the more impressive because Thelma is 93 years old.

And so, I ask my colleagues to share my gratitude for the efforts, dedication and excellence of Head Start and Thelma Adolph. I thank them all for their hard work and dedication on behalf of Montana's children.

91ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge and commemorate April 24, 2005, the 91st anniversary of the beginning of the Armenian genocide. I do so because I believe it is necessary to recognize and ensure that similar atrocities do not happen in the future.

No one knows this better than the 500,000 Armenians who are living in my home State of California. These men, women, and children are a shining example of the backbone of our society and serve as a symbol of perseverance and determination.

Their ancestors came to our country to build a better life for themselves and their families, and today, Armenian-Americans recognize that the repercussions of allowing aggression and injustice against ethnic, religious, or minority groups to persist can be dire.

During the Armenian genocide, which took place between 1915 and 1923, over a million Armenians were killed, and another 500,000 were driven from their homes.

We must never again allow a human tragedy to occur on this scale. It is unacceptable to witness thousands of innocent victims suffer and die without taking any action.

And I know this issue not only resonates with the Armenians in California but with everyone in the country. Every day, numerous constituents from different backgrounds call my office asking what Congress and the administration are doing to prevent genocide from occurring again.

It is absolutely essential that we do not let history repeat itself. We can—and we must—do better.

The Armenian-American community knows this all too well and today, we stand with them in commemorating the start of the Armenian genocide. So let us renew our commitment to support those around the world who face persecution and even death simply because of who they are. We will never forget the Armenian genocide, and we look to the present and future with a newfound sense of hope and optimism so that we may have the strength to stand up and prevent such atrocities.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to commemorate the 91st anniversary of the Armenian genocide on April 24th. This anniversary offers an opportunity for us to renew our

efforts to achieve—finally—genocide recognition for the Armenian people.

Ninety-one years ago, the Ottoman Turks began their systematic effort to eradicate the Armenian people. From 1915 until 1923, 1.5 million Armenians were tortured and killed; men were separated from their families and murdered; women and children were forced to march across the Syrian desert without water, food, or possessions; many died of hunger or thirst or were killed when they lagged behind during the forced marches into the desert.

The brutality of the genocide was atrocious. But the inhumanity continues today because the Turkish Government refuses to acknowledge the massacres as genocide. The wounds cannot heal until the Armenian people receive recognition.

The Armenian genocide was the first genocide of the 20th century. But as we have seen, it was not the last. As we know, if we ignore injustice, we are likely to see it repeated. In his justification for the Holocaust, Adolf Hitler said, "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?" And today, we see ongoing atrocities in the Darfur region of Sudan, with innocent civilians being murdered. In the 108th Congress, I cosponsored a resolution declaring that the atrocities in Darfur constitute genocide.

I am currently a cosponsor of a resolution calling the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the record of the United States relating to the Armenian genocide and the consequences of the failure to realize a just resolution. And I have signed onto a letter urging President Bush to honor the historic leadership of the United States in defending human rights and to properly characterize the atrocities against the Armenian people as genocide in his April 24th statement.

Every year, we move closer to recognition of the Armenian genocide. But every year, we wonder how long it will take the Government of Turkey to acknowledge the genocide.

We need genocide recognition to honor those 1.5 million Armenians who lost their lives and to honor the survivors who are still with us today. We need recognition to send a message to the 8 to 10 million Armenians worldwide that they have not been forgotten. We need genocide recognition to remind the world that crimes against humanity are crimes against us all. And we need genocide recognition because it is the right thing to do.

By acknowledging this genocide for what it is, I hope that we are able to help create a more just and humane world.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, on behalf of the Armenian population of Rhode Island and Armenians around the world, I want to recognize the 91st anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

Ninety-one years ago today, April 24, the Young Turk leaders of the Ottoman Empire summoned and executed over 200 Armenian community leaders. By 1923, an estimated 1.5 million Armenians were murdered, and another one half million were exiled, affecting the lives of every Armenian in Asia Minor.

Author John Minassian, a survivor of the 1915 Armenian genocide, tells of his experience. "These fine people were now being made into refugees only because they had clung to their ancient beliefs and the faith of their ancestors. They marched proudly under a yoke of hatred, prejudice and bigotry, their morale high, their spirit as yet unbroken. They knew that their only 'crime' was being Armenian."

The Armenian genocide was condemned at the time by representatives of the British, French, Russian, German, and Austrian Governments, both foes and allies of the Ottoman Empire.

Today, as a cosponsor of S. Res. 320, I call on the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the record of the United States relating to the Armenian genocide.

Armenian soldiers have supported Operation Iraqi Freedom as part of the Polish-led multinational division in south-central Iraq. Working as truck drivers, bomb detonators, and doctors, Armenia has not allowed others to be left helpless as they were nearly a century ago. The United States is proud to have Armenia as an ally in the rebuilding and reconstruction of Iraq.

So as history does not repeat itself, we must study and remember the events of our past. In instances such as the Armenian genocide, all nations must educate their youth in the hatred, the wrongdoing, and the oppression to deter future atrocities against humanity. Not more that two decades after the Armenian genocide, Hitler said to his generals on the eve of sending his death squads into Poland, "Go, kill without mercy . . . who today remembers the annihilation of the Armenians." We remember the Armenians.

Menk panav chenk mornar. We will never forget.

KHMER NEW YEAR

Mr. REED. Mr. President, on behalf of my fellow Rhode Islanders, I wish to recognize the 2550th anniversary of the Buddha, the Khmer New Year.

This cultural celebration highlights the rich heritage of Cambodian Americans, while recognizing contemporary Khmerian accomplishments. Ancient dance, music, and religious traditions of the Cambodian community are the focus of the holiday.

The festivity, celebrated in the reprieve between the harvest and the weeks referred to as the "rainy season," is an occasion for Cambodian Americans to pass their customs to fu-

ture generations while simultaneously allowing all Cambodians to share their culture with other Americans.

Traditionally, the anniversary of the Buddha affords Cambodians a chance to give thanks, reflect, and welcome the spirit Tevada Chhnam Thmey. Also, in accordance with tradition, scores of Cambodian Americans will gather with family and friends to visit the wat, the local spiritual center, to offer food to their clergymen, pray for ancestors, give charity to the less fortunate, forgive the misdeeds of others, and thank elders for their knowledge and care.

The Khmerian New Year ceremonies and activities demonstrate that each year brings new opportunities for charity, peace, and happiness. As we commemorate this important time, let us reflect on our Nation's continued efforts to promote universal human rights and democratic principles. Let us also take this opportunity to honor the Cambodian Americans currently serving in the U.S. armed services, for their daily sacrifice in protecting our freedom.

Finally, I would like to wish all Cambodian Americans happiness, prosperity, and good health in this, the Year of the Dog.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND ROGER PATRICK JOSEPH DORCY

• Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise to make a few remarks recognizing the Reverend Roger Patrick Joseph Dorcy.

The Reverend Roger Patrick Joseph Dorcy was born to Michael and Ellen Dorcy on July 4, 1946. Named for his Aunt Patricia, Patrick Joseph Dorcy was the third youngest of 14 siblings.

Growing up in Omaha, NE, he attended Holy Cross School, Creighton Preparatory School, and Mount Michael Abbey.

From 1967 to 1969 he worked for Senator Robert F. Kennedy in New York and Washington, DC.

He received his undergraduate and graduate degrees from St. Meinrad School of Theology in Indiana and completed post-graduate work at Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

Prior to his ordination to the priesthood he was a member of the Order of St. Benedict, St. Meinrad Archabbey. It was there he took the name Roger. Brother Roger was one of the order's youngest teachers, the Archabbey architect, a paramedic, and a firefighter.

When he left the Monastery, he moved to Colorado where he taught theology and English at St. Scholastica Academy in Canon City, CO. Finally answering his call, at the age of 33, Roger Patrick Dorcy was ordained a priest in the Diocese of Pueblo, Colorado, on January 29, 1980.

He served as pastor at Sacred Heart Church and campus minister at Adams State College in Alamosa, CO. He was