

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Under the order just entered, the Senate will return for regular business on Wednesday, January 25. On Tuesday, the Judiciary Committee should report the nomination of Samuel Alito to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. The leader has announced we will proceed to consider the nomination when it is available for floor debate and that will be on Wednesday. We will remain on the Alito nomination until we are able to vote on the confirmation. We hope to have an organized debate to allow all Members to speak. We will try to line up an order next week when we begin. The majority leader reiterates that Senators should be ready next week for this historic debate and that everyone should keep a flexible schedule so we can vote at the first available time.

Mr. REID. If the distinguished Senator will yield.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have received calls from a significant number of Senators. Senator FRIST is right, we will have a dignified debate. It will be organized. We will do whatever is appropriate according to who wants to speak. Most all Democratic Senators will want an opportunity to speak in regard to the nomination of Samuel Alito. We look forward to that sometime next week.

I also ask that following the swearing in of Congressman MENENDEZ, the only two speakers allowed in the Senate on this day are Senator MENENDEZ and Senator LAUTENBERG, the two Senators from New Jersey. This is in keeping with the agreement I have with Senator FRIST. I ask consent that be the case.

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

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, so ordered.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair lays before the Senate the letter of resignation of Senator Jon Corzine of New Jersey.

Without objection, the letter is deemed read and spread upon the Journal.

The letter follows.

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, January 13, 2006.
Hon. RICHARD B. CHENEY,
President of the U.S. Senate, U.S. Senate, The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I hereby give notice of my resignation of the office of the United States Senator from the State of New Jersey, effective 11:59 a.m. on January 17, 2006.

Sincerely,

JON S. CORZINE.

CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair now lays before the Senate the certificate of appointment of Senator-designate ROBERT MENENDEZ of the State of New Jersey.

Without objection, it will be placed on file and the certificate of appointment will be deemed to have been read.

The certificate follows.

STATE OF NEW JERSEY,
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR,
Trenton, NJ, January 17, 2006.

CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT

To: The President of the Senate of the United States

This is to certify that, pursuant to the power vested in me by the Constitution of the United States and the laws of the State of New Jersey, I, Jon S. Corzine, the governor of said State, do hereby appoint Robert Menendez a Senator from said State to represent said State in the Senate of the United States until the vacancy therein caused by my resignation from the Senate is filled by election as provided by law.

Witness: His excellency our governor, Jon S. Corzine, and our seal hereto affixed at Trenton this 17th day of January, in the year of our Lord 2006.

By the governor:

JON S. CORZINE,
Governor.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator-designate will present himself at the desk and the Chair will administer the oath of office as required by the Constitution and prescribed by law.

The Senator-designate, ROBERT MENENDEZ, escorted by Mr. LAUTENBERG, advanced to the desk of the Vice President; the oath prescribed by law was administered to him by the President pro tempore, and he subscribed to the oath in the Official Oath Book.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Congratulations.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

MAKING MINORITY PARTY ASSIGNMENTS TO COMMITTEES FOR THE 109TH CONGRESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a resolution at the desk. I ask for its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COBURN). The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 348) making minority party assignments to certain Senate committees for the 109th Congress.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and there be no intervening action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 348) was agreed to as follows:

S. RES. 348

Resolved, that notwithstanding the provisions of Rule XXV, the following shall con-

stitute the minority party's membership on the following standing committees for the 109th Congress, or until their successors are chosen:

Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs: Mr. Sarbanes (Ranking Member), Mr. Dodd, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Reed, Mr. Schumer, Mr. Bayh, Mr. Carper, Ms. Stabenow, and Mr. Menendez.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Mr. Bingaman (Ranking Member), Mr. Akaka, Mr. Dorgan, Mr. Wyden, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Landrieu, Mrs. Feinstein, Ms. Cantwell, Mr. Salazar, and Mr. Menendez.

Special Committee on Aging: Mr. Kohl (Ranking Member), Mr. Jeffords, Mr. Wyden, Mrs. Lincoln, Mr. Bayh, Mr. Carper, Mr. Nelson of Florida, Mrs. Clinton, and Mr. Salazar.

Committee on the Budget: Mr. Conrad (Ranking Member), Mr. Sarbanes, Mrs. Murray, Mr. Wyden, Mr. Feingold, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Byrd, Mr. Nelson of Florida, Ms. Stabenow, and Mr. Menendez.

Select Committee on Ethics: Mr. Johnson (Vice Chairman), Mr. Pryor and Mr. Salazar.

Select Committee on Intelligence: Mr. Rockefeller (Vice Chairman), Mr. Levin, Mrs. Feinstein, Mr. Wyden, Mr. Bayh, Ms. Mikulski, and Mr. Feingold.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

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

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

SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I thank the leadership for according me an opportunity to present my new colleague. All of us are going to be missing Jon Corzine, a dear friend and former colleague who served this body very well but responded to the call of duty when things in New Jersey needed a leading hand. Jon Corzine responded and took up the assignment.

In Senator Corzine's place, we are fortunate to be able to have a candidate of the skill and knowledge that Senator ROBERT MENENDEZ has.

BOB MENENDEZ is a typical American story. He was born in America of parents who had immigrated from Cuba. He has worked his way through the system very well. As a very young man—high school age—he challenged the mayor and the leadership of the community in which he lived in New Jersey and fought his way to making certain they were going to be cleaning up some of their bad habits in Union City, such that he had to at times wear a bulletproof vest when he was 17 years old. He, thusly, had a place in the political mainstream as a very young man.

He became mayor of Union City, NJ, and then served in our general assembly from 1987 until 1991 and in the New Jersey Senate—he has been through all of the steps to leadership—from 1991 to 1993. He then came to the U.S. Congress

and was soon appointed—he worked hard to get it. I should strike the word “appointed” and say he worked his way so that he became the third most powerful member on the Democratic side in the House of Representatives.

I look forward to working with BOB. BOB comes from Hudson County, one of our most populated counties in the most densely populated State in the country. He worked on the issues of transportation, and education is a particular interest of his. It can be reflected in the fact that his daughter, Alicia Menendez, was the commencement speaker at her graduation from Harvard.

I was very impressed at the leadership provided by her family, by her father's interest in public speaking, and in Government. She had to prepare her address in a competition to see who would be the student commencement speaker. Alicia won that competition with a very lengthy speech. She then, contrary to our habits here, was told to put aside her notes, take a microphone, and make the speech verbally to the graduating class of Harvard. I think it was 2 years ago. And she did it wonderfully—again, a reflection of the leadership that BOB MENENDEZ provided to the family.

His son Robert is at a university in North Carolina and is also a very accomplished young man.

Mr. MENENDEZ and I will be working together on lots of issues that we worked on in the past, I as a Senator and he as a Congressman, particularly, again, focused on transportation, environment, and security.

BOB MENENDEZ's county had the biggest loss of those who perished on 9/11—over 700 people from New Jersey. BOB MENENDEZ was there to help provide some warmth, friendship, and leadership to the problems that followed the loss of those loved ones and the impairment that it brought to those families.

I am so pleased to have someone who understands New Jersey fully, who has lived the traditional dream from very modest working class parents who escaped Cuba in those very dark days and lifted himself up by his bootstraps. We are going to be working together on issues such as transportation, education, security, and some of the problems we now see with Medicare.

My State of New Jersey now has spent \$15 million in the last couple of weeks trying to help people get their prescription drugs as a result of the enormous change that took place starting in 2006. They could not get the product, and the State of New Jersey jumped in, as I would gather almost every State in this country has done, and that is to fill in where Medicare dropped off.

I look forward to working with BOB MENENDEZ on that issue, and I hope it will be high on the list—on an urgent list—of matters to which we have to attend.

Meanwhile, I once again say that BOB MENENDEZ represents not only New

Jersey, but he represents the contribution that Latino Americans make to this country. BOB MENENDEZ will be the third person to join this Senate with a Hispanic background—Senator MARTINEZ, Senator SALAZAR, and now Senator MENENDEZ. It is so appropriate when such a large portion of our population has that cultural background. They are wonderful contributing citizens in our State. We have a very large Latino population, and they are all very proud of Senator MENENDEZ.

It is a historic day for the State of New Jersey and for the country that one of our terrific colleagues is now the Governor of the State of New Jersey. I predict he will be looking in the mirror one of these days and questioning the change he decided to make. He has a tough job. There is a lot of debt. We had some unfortunate mistakes in governance over the past few years. We are desperately in need of support for transportation and other programs. I think Jon Corzine, with his leadership training, having been the chairman and CEO of Goldman Sachs, will make a difference. He left here to take on what he considered a more important, immediate test. We are so pleased that he is replaced by someone such as ROBERT MENENDEZ, Senator MENENDEZ, who just walked in.

I remember the days—my colleague from Virginia is on the floor. We have been around here a long time. So very often the issues of wonderment disappear. We are into the nitty-gritty of issues and we forget sometimes about the excitement of being able to serve in this body. The Presiding Officer knows exactly what I am talking about, having been here only a short time, but also having come from the House of Representatives, and note that change.

When I spoke to BOB MENENDEZ and described to him the seat that he would have, which is the furthest away that one can get, he said to me that he is happy to have a seat anywhere in this Chamber. Sometimes we forget that in our daily toil.

I wound up sitting right near where the Senator from Virginia is, and I was talking to Scoop Jackson. I said: Nice seat. He said: Don't get used to it, you're not going to keep it. In the next couple of days, I wound up over in the freshman seats.

BOB MENENDEZ is a freshman, skilled, able, knowledgeable. We are very excited about him being here. He is going to be a wonderful Member of the Senate.

I thank the Chair and thank the leadership for granting me the opportunity to speak today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia is recognized.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, first I commend my good friend, the good Senator from the State of New Jersey, for his remarks this morning on behalf of his colleague. I was privileged to attend what is known here as a reenactment in the Old Chamber just now and had the chance to wish him well. We do wish him well.

I certainly say to my distinguished colleague, the new Governor of New Jersey, our former colleague whom we all hold in high esteem, we wish him well in his responsibilities. The Senator mentioned that, of course, he departed to take on this authority. You know, there is a precedent in your State for recycling back here. It seems to me the distinguished senior Senator is here on his second term.

I thank my colleague.

CAMBODIA

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today, I would like to address a troubling series of events that has recently transpired in Cambodia. In the past year, the government of Prime Minister Hun Sen has engaged in a widespread campaign to silence his critics, stifle dissent, and enfeeble his political opposition.

The result of these actions has been a very disturbing erosion of Cambodia's commitment to democratic principles, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights.

Nearly a year ago, in February 2005, Cambodia's National Assembly voted to revoke the parliamentary immunity from prosecution of opposition leader Mr. Sam Rainsy and two of his colleagues. The alleged offense was defaming the Prime Minister.

Just after this vote, Mr. Rainsy and one of his colleagues, Chea Poch, managed to escape Cambodia to avoid arrest. However, the other opposition parliamentarian and an ally of Mr. Rainsy, Cheam Channy, was arrested.

Several months later, in August 2005, Cheam Channy was sentenced to 7 years in prison for allegedly forming “a secret army to overthrow the government.” And, in December 2005, Sam Rainsy was sentenced in absentia to 18 months in prison for defaming the Prime Minister and the President of the National Assembly.

The Cambodian Government's assault on its political opposition is only the tip of the iceberg. The Prime Minister has also carried out a campaign against human rights activists in Cambodia.

In a period of 5 days, just before and after the new year, three of Cambodia's top human rights activists were arrested. These included Mr. Kern Sokha, president of the Cambodian Center for Human Rights; Mr. Yeng Virak, director of the Community Legal Education Center; and Pa Nguon Teang, a journalist and the acting leader of Mr. Kern Sokha's human rights organization.

Again, these activists and critics of the Government were detained on trumped-up defamation charges.

These arrests and detentions are just the latest in a series of actions aimed at silencing the critics of the Cambodian Government. In addition to members of the political opposition, Cambodia's Government has also targeted prominent individuals in the media, trade unions, and civil society.