

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRAGEDY AT VIRGINIA TECH

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I join so many of my colleagues today to rise in sadness and horror at what happened in Virginia at Virginia Tech. To see the picture of one of the young women, who was allegedly slain, go on the TV screen and see her young beautiful face and realize her life has been taken and thinking of her family and then magnifying this at least 30 times, it is almost too much to bear. This is a terrible tragedy for all of us.

We pray and mourn for those who were lost. At times such as this, the only solace one can take is that God works in ways we don't understand. But I wish to add my condolences to those families who lost loved ones, pray for the recovery of those who were injured, and to all the people of the Virginia Tech community, our hearts go out to you on this sad day.

I yield the floor.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007—Continued

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I rise to oppose cloture on the Intelligence authorization. There are plenty of things wrong with this bill, but our primary objection, once again, is the way it is being handled on the floor.

The Democratic majority has filed 21 cloture motions so far this session. At this rate, we will have 160 cloture motions by the end of the 110th Congress. This would shatter the old record of 82 back in 1995 and 1996.

The purpose of filing cloture early is to end debate and accelerate the passage of a measure, but abusing this privilege has the opposite effect. If the minority is shut out of the debate, it will block participation until their Members are respected and their voices are given an opportunity to be heard. We have seen this happen again and again over the last 3½ months as the majority has repeatedly struggled and failed to move legislation.

Republicans take no joy in this, but we will continue to defend our right to

be heard. The Senate, as we have learned over the years, is not the House. Contrast this torpid pace of legislation in this Congress with the first 3½ months of the last one, when Republicans passed some of the most far-reaching civil justice reforms in decades. Republicans knew that the price of passing laws was to work with the minority, to have an open debate, and to vote on amendments the other side had to offer.

On bankruptcy reform, for example, we allowed 30 votes, including final passage. On this date, in the first session of the 109th Congress, Republicans had filed only four cloture motions. Looking back to the previous Congress on this date, we had only filed four cloture motions. We have had 21 filed by the new majority.

On this date in the first session of the 108th Congress, we had filed 5 cloture motions, as compared to 21 at this point with the new majority. On this date in the first session of the 107th Congress, we had only filed one cloture motion.

I think the message is pretty clear. I started this session by expressing the hope that we would do big and important things for the country. The realities of divided Government and the rules of the Senate make that supremely possible, and I thought the bipartisan meeting we had that first week in the Old Senate Chamber was a sign of good things to come. I still have that hope, and I see a real opportunity opening with the early steps the majority leader has taken on immigration reform. We are going to that the last 2 weeks before the Memorial Day recess. I think that is a good thing. I commend him for it.

It is my hope that this trend of limited debate and limited amendments—which, of course, leads to the limitation of minority rights—will soon come to an end. Madam President, 3½ months is not that long a time. We can still correct course and accomplish very important things for our country.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order and pursuant to rule XXII, the clerk will report the motion to invoke cloture.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on Calendar No. 20, S. 372, the Intelligence Authorization bill of 2007.

Harry Reid, Chuck Schumer, Russell D. Feingold, Jay Rockefeller, Evan Bayh, Patty Murray, Dick Durbin, Jeff Bingaman, Robert Menendez, B.A. Mikulski, Dianne Feinstein, Bill Nelson, E. Benjamin Nelson, S. Whitehouse, Byron L. Dorgan, Blanche L. Lincoln, Ron Wyden.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived. The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that de-

bate on S. 372, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Intelligence Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY), the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA), are necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) would each vote "yea."

LOTT. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. CRAIG), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. GREGG), the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. McCAIN), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) would have voted "nay."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 41, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 130 Leg.]

YEAS—41

Akaka	Durbin	Murray
Baucus	Feingold	Nelson (NE)
Bayh	Feinstein	Pryor
Bingaman	Inouye	Reed
Boxer	Kennedy	Rockefeller
Brown	Klobuchar	Salazar
Byrd	Kohl	Sanders
Cantwell	Leahy	Schumer
Cardin	Levin	Stabenow
Carper	Lieberman	Tester
Casey	Lincoln	Webb
Clinton	McCaskill	Whitehouse
Conrad	Menendez	Wyden
Dorgan	Mikulski	

NAYS—40

Alexander	Crapo	Lugar
Allard	Dole	McConnell
Bennett	Domenici	Murkowski
Bond	Enzi	Reid
Bunning	Grassley	Sessions
Burr	Hagel	Shelby
Chambliss	Hatch	Smith
Coburn	Hutchison	Snowe
Coleman	Inhofe	Specter
Collins	Isakson	Stevens
Corker	Kyl	
Cornyn	Lott	

Sununu	Thune	Voinovich
Thomas	Vitter	Warner
NOT VOTING—19		
Biden	Graham	Martinez
Brownback	Gregg	McCain
Cochran	Harkin	Nelson (FL)
Craig	Johnson	Obama
DeMint	Kerry	Roberts
Dodd	Landrieu	
Ensign	Lautenberg	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 41, the nays are 40. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I move to reconsider the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I have to declare myself absolutely a series of things: furious, double-crossed, misled, minimized—in terms of my role as a Senator and as chairman of the Intelligence Committee—shocked by the arrogance of the technique that was used between the White House and the minority leader to say to Republicans, after weeks in which Vice Chairman BOND and I worked out a compromise on a managers' amendment on which we worked in good faith—I dropped things he did not like, he dropped things I did not like—but it was a genuine effort.

Vice Chairman BOND, whom I respect greatly, stood here praising the managers' amendment. Then the word came down from the White House—not from Vice Chairman BOND but from the White House—through the minority leader, that this vote was to be a test of Republican Party loyalty and that therefore all Republicans were instructed to vote against it.

In all of my years in the Senate, and certainly all of my years on the Intelligence Committee, I have never seen something so repugnant, putting politics over national security. That is the bottom line. Politics was put over national security.

An order came down: This is a test of Republican Party loyalty. When it comes to that, by golly, you put politics over national security.

Thirty-one people, at least, died at Virginia Tech University this afternoon. All of my kids went to camp there. I know a number of students down there. I called to find out that they were OK, and there was grief everywhere. Republicans were standing up, Democrats were standing up expressing they were horrified.

I was just trying to figure out how many intelligence agents, how many soldiers—because of inadequate intelligence or because of some slip-up or something we had not done, something which we were prepared to correct or did correct in the managers' amendment—died, and I suspect the number was essentially greater than 31.

Now, my heart goes out to those 31. I know some of them who were spared. I was in despair until I knew they were OK.

But this act of cynicism, this act for the third year in a row, blocking intelligence legislation is beyond me. We all understand nothing can happen in military action without intelligence leading the way in; to scout out the territory, to get the feeling, to get through language skills, et cetera, to get the feeling of what is going on so we know what we are getting into.

I will not get into the importance of intelligence for Iraq or Afghanistan, but this is a real crusher. I am not shocked or discouraged with the intelligence. I am more fired up than ever on intelligence. I am shocked because something like this happens in the United States Senate for any reason at any time. I have been in this body for 24 years.

I have been in this body for 24 years, and on one occasion a majority leader called me at home—I happened to be shaving, and it was not a convenient phone call—and asked me to vote against a particular piece of legislation, which I was going to vote against in any event. That has never happened since then. Not once have I been instructed by my party or by my minority or majority leader to vote a certain way.

Yet when it comes to national security, to funding intelligence agencies, where we change the authorities, where we spent weeks in trying to work out hard problems, and did so in the managers' amendment, with more amendments to come, which we would have agreed to, to alleviate the White House's concern—the White House decided they do not like oversight. Well, I understand that. When I was a Governor, I did not like oversight. Nobody likes oversight, but it is our constitutional responsibility. We do not have that choice. We have that duty.

One of the great things about the Intelligence Committee is it has come together in recent months to accept this responsibility and to reach out and take hold of it with a vigor and a lust that makes us want to do more—but not to overdo but to do. Then along comes this vote.

It certainly is the most disappointing day, the most disappointing vote, the most disappointing sign of where we are in this country—the most disappointing sense of the relationship between the executive branch and the legislative branch—the failure of the realization we exist for a reason, that we work hard, getting ready for this vote because we had a chance to do it. Then comes down the instruction: No. Politics trumps national security. Prove you are a loyal Republican. Vote no.

It is not a good day in the Senate.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I was fortunate enough to serve on the Intelligence Committee for 4 years and served with the Senator from West Vir-

ginia, as well as the Senator from Missouri. It is one of the toughest assignments in the Senate. It is time consuming. It is demanding. It takes a long time to even understand the nature of our intelligence community and the valuable work they do.

I salute all members of the Intelligence Committee on both sides of the aisle for sticking with it. They do not get a lot of public attention because these hearings and deliberations are behind closed doors. This is classified information. It is critically important for the security of the United States of America that this Intelligence Committee work and work closely with the intelligence agencies.

I want to say a word on behalf of the chairman of this Intelligence Committee on the Senate side, Senator ROCKEFELLER. I cannot think of a person who has put in more time—certainly on our side of the aisle but in the Senate—dedicated to doing this job right. It must be next to impossible to keep up with everything else he has to do, but he has dedicated himself to this. I know how much this bill means to him.

This reauthorization bill for the intelligence agencies is critically important to him personally, but, more importantly, it really means so much for our Nation. If our intelligence does not get it right, we are more vulnerable. If we are more vulnerable, it means that not just people living in Springfield, IL, but our troops in the field are more vulnerable. So he has worked overtime to bring this intelligence authorization bill to the floor in a spirit of bipartisanship, as he described.

This amendment, which was just stopped by this procedural motion, is a bipartisan amendment. It is from both the chairman of the committee, Senator ROCKEFELLER, and the vice chairman of the committee, Senator BOND—Democrat and Republican. I believe him when he says he has worked in a spirit of compromise to try to find a reasonable position.

Now, when we offer this amendment, this substitute amendment, to the Senate, and say, if you have something you want to offer to improve it—Senator REID said that earlier—I cannot think of a fairer way to approach an issue, which should not be political at all.

One amendment was offered. It is my understanding only one amendment was offered. It looked like we were finally going to get this reauthorization of intelligence agencies that are so important for our security. Along comes this procedural vote, which should have been a toss-away vote. It ends up virtually stopping the debate on this critical bill. Why? I cannot understand it.

We have said: Offer your amendments, and only one amendment was offered. Senator ROCKEFELLER has worked with the Republican side of the aisle for a bipartisan approach. You have given; the other side has given. It

was a good spirit of compromise, cooperation. That is what people want. Certainly, when it comes to the security of our Nation, you do not expect us to come in as Democrats and Republicans. We have a lot more responsibility.

So what happened now? When we tried to bring this to a point where it could pass, where the amendments would be limited to the most germane amendments that really get to the heart of the issue, the other side of the aisle, voted no, and now we are stuck.

They knew what they were doing. They were trying to kill this bill. But why would they want to stop this bill? This is a good bipartisan bill essential for the security of America that had been arrived at in a bipartisan manner, and they stopped it. I do not understand that.

I salute Senator ROCKEFELLER for his leadership. I understand his frustration. Certainly, the people who depend on us in the Senate, in a bipartisan fashion, to keep America safe were let down by this vote where the overwhelming majority of Republican Senators voted no.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANDERS). The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I came here earlier today anticipating there would be Republicans who would rise above the partisan clamor. I looked, as the vote was being cast: no, no, no, at the people I thought could do this.

Sixteen agencies are all responsible for gathering intelligence information for our country.

Mr. President, let's call it the way it is. Vice President CHENEY runs the intelligence operations of this administration. He has for 6 years. It apparently is not going to stop. We could not even improve the intelligence-gathering operations for the 16 agencies because it may interfere with the Vice President.

Mr. President, even the vice chairman of the committee voted against moving forward. I heard his conversation with the chairman, why he was doing this—because he had been asked to do it. We have had experiences in the past with the way the Republicans—everybody, hear that—have handled the intelligence-gathering information for our Nation. The Senate had to be closed using rule XXII to get some minimal information how the evidence was manipulated to take us to war in Iraq, and we got some of that information.

There has been a change in the leadership of the Senate. I was hopeful it would be better, and it has been for 3 months. There has been cooperation between the two Senators, the chairman and vice chairman. We are not dealing with—we have had to invoke cloture on everything we have done here because, as I said earlier today, I thought a minority of Republican Senators was standing in the way of our

doing what we have done—minimum wage, stem cell, all that stuff.

But here we are dealing with our spies. That is what they are. We know from the situation where there has been an indictment and conviction that the White House was involved in that up to their neck with the “Scooter” Libby matter. Karl Rove appeared before the grand jury on three or four or five occasions trying to extricate himself. The President said anyone who had anything to do with leaking information would be dumped from the administration quickly. Of course, that has not happened. I guess there is nothing in the minds of Karl Rove and his minions that is not politics—even the spy operations of this country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, there have been some insinuations which have been thrown around on the other side. Let me be clear. This was not a cloture vote on the managers' amendment. This was a cloture vote on the bill. Many Republican Senators had asked to have an opportunity to offer amendments. Some 35 amendments have been submitted. The time for submitting the amendments shut off at 2:30 today, and we have at least 10 or so Senators who could not get back here.

Now, this bill is a good bill. But we have no reason, before we even start work on the bill, to invoke cloture to shut off amendments. Nobody from the White House told us to do that. We have Republican Senators who wanted to have an opportunity to offer amendments and vote. This is a critically important bill for the intelligence community, and I believe we need to work on it at least a couple of days. Is that too much to ask, that we work on it a couple of days?

I know the leader has entered a motion to reconsider. And if there is any sense—if there is any sense—that there is dilatory action, if there is any sense that we are not moving quickly on this bill in very short order, I would join with him and urge my Republican colleagues to do so to move this bill forward. This bill is one that has to pass if we are to get our legitimate congressional oversight.

I am not going to get into the arguments between the leaders on how many times we have invoked cloture. But on this one—this one—I gladly urged everybody to vote for cloture to proceed to the bill. There may be some in the executive branch who did not want us to. There may be a lot of provisions in the bill on oversight that the executive branch does not want. I believe we have a responsibility—a responsibility—to consider this carefully.

Reference has been made to a number of things that were inaccurate. There was a reference made to having to shut down the Senate to get a process moving in one of the second-phase investigations. The staff work had essentially been completed. The staff, under bipartisan leadership, had worked on

getting that done. Shutting down the Senate was a great show, but it did nothing to move forward that particular phase of the investigation.

Now, I want to see this committee—and I hope this body—operate on a bipartisan basis. But I was very disappointed when I saw that cloture had been filed before we even started the process of amendments. Cloture is necessary when you see there is a filibuster or you see there are nongermane amendments. Some of the amendments are nongermane and I will ask that they be withdrawn or I will join in a tabling motion, but I think this subject, which has not been debated on the floor sufficiently in recent years, should be open to a thorough debate. We don't want to take up a lot of time. We need to get this bill to the House and work with them to get a good Intelligence authorization bill through.

The insinuation that we got an order from the White House is absolutely without basis. They are working with us in a cooperative way, and I hope to move forward on this bill, which is now open for amendment and debate. I look forward to the opportunity to proceed with that debate and votes on the bill.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have the greatest respect for the senior Senator from Missouri, but his facts are all messed up. We tried to bring this bill to the floor for a full debate. In the Senate, as everyone knows, you have to move to proceed to the bill. We did that. They objected. We had to file cloture on even being able to proceed to the bill. They initially said: We are not going to give you cloture. Then they gave us cloture. The purpose of that was to stall for time. They voted to proceed. I said immediately: Why waste the 30 hours? The rule in the Senate is you have 30 hours after you complete the cloture. I said: Offer amendments during this period of time. Don't waste the time. We could have done that last week. I told everybody. All the staff knew that: But no, nothing. I indicated we would be happy to do relevant amendments on this bill.

I ask unanimous consent now that there be four relevant amendments in order for each side and that when they are disposed of, the Senate move to final passage of the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I apologize.

Mr. REID. I will repeat the request. I ask unanimous consent that there be four relevant amendments in order for each side and that when they are disposed of, the Senate vote on final passage.

Mr. BOND. Reserving the right to object, we have 35 amendments. There are 10 amendments which I believe have the support of the chairman and the vice chairman. I will be happy to work tomorrow with the leaders, with the chairman, to develop a list of amendments and get a time agreement. But

the whole purpose was to move this bill forward and find out what amendments are coming from both sides. I don't know about amendments from people who are not here.

I object to that proceeding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, let me say, it is a funny way of wanting to move forward on this bill by stopping cloture twice during the last 30 hours. I repeat, I said anybody who wanted to could offer amendments. We sat for 2 days doing nothing, for 30 hours doing nothing.

I hope the distinguished Senator from Missouri and my friend, my dear friend for life, the junior Senator from West Virginia, can work something out. That is why I moved to reconsider. I hope that on this very important piece of legislation, we are able to move forward. This has nothing to do with partisan politics. This is the security of our Nation and much of the world.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, as I indicated earlier, I want to see this bill move forward. It is open for amendment and debate. I will work with the chairman, with the leaders on both sides to come to a short time agreement with amendments to be considered. If that cannot be accepted, if we have any indication that this bill is going to be drawn out, then I will work with the leadership to get us to a position to vote on the bill. I remain committed to seeing this bill go forward, but I believe we have the need for at least a day's debate. The objection to proceeding on the bill was withdrawn. There could have been debate on Friday, but we weren't in. Now we are back in session, and I hope both sides can come forward and offer their amendments and offer their debates, and have votes and move this bill to final passage and send it to conference.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. We weren't in session because there was no activity on this bill. No one was offering amendments. I would go one step further than the distinguished Senator from Missouri suggested. The amendments have been filed. Why don't we do the relevant amendments? I don't know how many there are. Let's do the ones that are in keeping with the rules of the Senate, go ahead and handle those, starting in the morning.

That is all I have, Mr. President.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS DAVID NEIL SIMMONS

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart and deep sense of gratitude to honor the life of a brave young man from Kokomo. Neil Simmons, 20 years old, was killed on April 8 while deployed in Baghdad, when his convoy encountered an improvised explosive device and insurgent fire. He had been in Iraq for less than 2 weeks. With his entire life before him, Neil risked everything to fight for the values Americans hold close to our hearts, in a land halfway around the world.

Neil attended Kokomo's Northwestern High School and followed the example set by his father and uncle by enlisting in the Army a few months before graduating in 2005. He enjoyed the structure of the military and felt a sense of duty to serve his community and country. His father described Neil as "an avid outdoorsman who was happy and always had plenty of friends."

Neil was killed while serving his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was a member of the 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, in Fort Benning, GA. Neil's father reflected on his son's death, asking, "What's the odds of, among 160,000 troops your only child is there one week and gets killed?" Private First Class Simmons leaves behind his father David and uncle Jim Simmons.

Today, I join Neil's family and friends in mourning his death. While we struggle to bear our sorrow over this loss, we can also take pride in the example he set, bravely fighting to make the world a safer place. It is his courage and strength of character that people will remember when they think of Neil, a memory that will burn brightly during these continuing days of conflict and grief.

Neil was known for his dedication to his family and his love of country. Today and always, Neil will be remembered by family members, friends, and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we honor the sacrifice he made while dutifully serving his country.

As I search for words to do justice in honoring Neil's sacrifice, I am reminded of President Lincoln's remarks as he addressed the families of the fallen soldiers in Gettysburg: "We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our

poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here." This statement is just as true today as it was nearly 150 years ago, as I am certain that the impact of Neil's actions will live on far longer than any record of these words.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of David Neil Simmons in the official RECORD of the U.S. Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy and peace. When I think about this just cause in which we are engaged and the unfortunate pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope that families like Neil's can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Neil.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I take this opportunity today to solemnly commemorate the 92nd Anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

The Armenian genocide was the first genocide of the 20th century. From 1915 until 1923, 1.5 million Armenians were brutally killed by the Ottoman Turks in a systematic effort to eradicate the Armenian people. There were unbearable acts of torture; men were separated from their families and murdered; women and children were put on a forced march across the Syrian desert without food or water.

Henry Morgenthau, the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916, recalled:

When the Turkish authorities gave the orders for these deportations, they were merely giving the death warrant to a whole race; they understood this well, and, in their conversations with me, they made no particular attempt to conceal the fact . . . I am confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this. The great massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost insignificant when compared to the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915.

However, we were to witness other such horrible genocides later, including the Holocaust and the genocide in Darfur, which is happening today.

As with later genocides, some have tried to deny that the Armenian genocide happened. Shamefully, the Government of Turkey still refuses to admit that genocide occurred.

In order for democracy and human rights to flourish, we must not support efforts to rewrite and deny history. In the United States, we strive to make human rights a fundamental component of our democracy. It is long overdue for our nation to demand that the truth be told. We must recognize the Armenian genocide in the name of democracy, fairness and human rights.

At the beginning of the 21st century, as genocide is waged in Darfur, it is