

and airmen mobilized in support of American operations overseas. In addition, thousands of National Guard members have responded to the litany of major disasters that devastated several areas of the country in the recent years. I applaud the National Guard for its vital work in protecting our country at home and abroad and commend its 375 years of dedicated service.

TRIBUTE TO GUION S. BLUFORD, JR.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to recognize Guion S. Bluford, Jr. for being the 2011 recipient of the Pennsylvania Society Gold Medal for Distinguished Achievement.

Mr. Bluford was born on November 22, 1942, to Guion Senior and Lolita Bluford in Philadelphia, PA. Mr. Bluford grew up in inner-city Philadelphia during a time of great prejudice and social change. As a youth he spent his free time reading about aviation technology, building model aircrafts, and dreaming of flying aircrafts.

Mr. Bluford attended Pennsylvania State University and joined the Air Force ROTC Program, receiving his FAA pilot license while still a senior in college. After graduating college in 1964 Mr. Bluford was assigned to the 556th Tactical Fighter Squadron in Vietnam and flew over 140 combat missions in Southeast Asia.

In 1978, Mr. Bluford was selected as one of NASA's class of 35 astronauts. On August 30, 1980, Mr. Bluford became America's first African American in space when he flew to orbit aboard the shuttle *Challenger*. During his career at NASA he flew on several other space missions, and when he retired in July 1993, he had logged more than 688 hours in space.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Guion S. Bluford, Jr., for his years of service to our country. I invite my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Bluford for his recent award and wish him well in the future.

TRIBUTE TO MARTY PETERSON

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, today I join with Idaho's senior Senator MIKE CRAPO to recognize and pay tribute to the exceptional dedication of Marty Peterson, who is retiring after 51 years of public service in our great State.

For nearly 20 years, Marty has served as the special assistant to the president of the University of Idaho. He has served seven U of I presidents during that time, giving them valuable insight into the politics of the State as he oversaw the government affairs work of the university.

Marty has an in-depth understanding of Idaho's government, having served as the budget director under Governors John Evans and Cecil Andrus. He also served on the staff of U.S. Senator Frank Church and was executive direc-

tor of the Association of Idaho Cities. His counsel was always valuable and insightful.

It is no wonder, when Idaho was going to celebrate its 100th birthday in 1990, he was asked to oversee the planning and implementation of the State's centennial celebration. Twenty years later, he was the cochair of the committee that planned the rededication of Idaho's newly restored capitol building. Marty could always be counted on to deliver quality results.

His education and military service may have had something to do with his success. At the age of 17, as a junior in high school, he joined the Army National Guard. Marty served 8 years and was a staff sergeant when he was discharged.

Marty is a graduate of Columbia Basin College, the University of Idaho, and Harvard University's Senior Managers in Government Program. But through the years, Marty never stopped learning. He adapted, he studied and continued to provide good counsel to those who sought out his advice.

He consistently shares his time and expertise with community groups. Currently, he serves on the board of directors of the Foundation for Idaho History, North Idaho Chamber of Commerce, Idaho Humanities Council, and the James A. and Louise McClure Center for Public Policy, as well as on the advisory board for the School of Journalism and Mass Media at the University of Idaho.

In addition, he is the current president of the Historic Silver City Foundation and a past president of the City Club of Boise and the Idaho Hemingway House Foundation.

As a well-known Hemingway scholar, Marty has lectured on Hemingway throughout the United States, Spain, and Cuba. He has also been very involved in the preservation of Ernest Hemingway's home in Ketchum, ID and in Cuba.

Although Marty will be retiring from the working world at the end of 2011, we know he will continue serving these and other groups throughout the State. His retirement will give him more time to spend with his wife Barb and their family and especially the grandchildren.

When people ask us what makes Idaho such a great place, we could talk about the beautiful mountains, skiing, whitewater rafting, hunting and fishing, or a myriad of other things. But in reality, it is people such as Marty Peterson who work to make Idaho even better—that is why Idaho is so great.

It is with our sincere thanks and well wishes that Senator CRAPO and I recognize Marty Peterson for his many contributions to the State of Idaho and its people. We wish him a happy and productive retirement.

ANNIVERSARY OF BELARUS ELECTION

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the coura-

geous men and women who are struggling for freedom in Belarus.

Almost 1 year ago, on December 19, 2010, elections took place in Belarus. At that time, some in the United States and Europe hoped that this vote would be a turning point for Belarus and that its authoritarian ruler, Aleksandr Lukashenko, would finally begin to pursue the political and economic reforms demanded by his people.

In fact, the December 19 election was a turning point for Belarus—but not in the way that some had hoped. It soon became obvious that the election had been egregiously rigged by the regime. In response, thousands of Belarusians from every background peacefully took to the streets in protest. It was the most significant public demonstration the country had seen in over a half decade, and the Lukashenko regime responded with violence.

On that day, Belarusian security forces detained or arrested over 600 peaceful protestors. Hundreds more were surrounded by armored tanks and beaten by thugs dispatched by the regime. The Lukashenko regime arrested seven opposition candidates who participated in the vote, severely beating one candidate. In the year that has followed the election, hundreds of people—including several Presidential candidates—have been sentenced to lengthy prison terms in sham trials that have again revealed Belarus' judicial system to be nothing more than a political tool abused by the regime. It is a system that has institutionalized torture and denies its prisoners access to family, lawyers, medical treatment, and open legal proceedings.

I should note that the peaceful protests that erupted in Belarus 1 year ago took place just 2 days after a 26-year-old man in the Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid set himself on fire, which in turn sparked a series of peaceful protests that overthrew the long-ruling dictator in that country—starting the Arab Spring. But as the winds of change sweep across north Africa and the Middle East, ousting some of the world's most entrenched regimes, it is important for us to remember that there remains one last dictatorship in Europe; that is, the Lukashenko regime in Belarus.

Despite the extraordinary changes taking place around the world, the Lukashenko regime has sustained, and even intensified, its crackdown against its own people. This is a regime that recently outlawed nearly all forms of public speech and peaceful assembly, including silent protest. It is a regime that, instead of responding to the legitimate demands of its people, has sought to cultivate close ties with other dictatorships, like the regime in Tehran. It is a regime that, according to reports, delivered military equipment to the Qadhafi regime in Libya in February 2011 just as it prepared to slaughter its own people.

Over the past year, I have been encouraged by the close cooperation between the United States and the European Union to hold accountable those in Belarus who are responsible for the brutal crackdown there. Continued transatlantic coordination on Belarus is vital. The Euro-Atlantic community of democracies must speak with one voice to ratchet up pressure on Lukashenko. And while the United States and the EU have taken strong and important steps, including imposing travel bans on nearly 200 Belarusian officials, freezing the assets that these officials hold in the West, and both renewing and imposing new sanctions on Belarusian state-owned enterprises, more can be done.

In particular, I hope that in the weeks ahead, the United States and the EU will implement sanctions against other state-owned entities that enrich the Lukashenko regime at the expense of the Belarusian people.

Furthermore, it is critical that at a moment when the Lukashenko regime is looking for a financial lifeline to keep himself in power, the United States and our allies work together to ensure that responsible international institutions and actors—including the IMF—do not lend money to that regime. It is clear—as we have seen over the past 2 years—that such funds will only be used by Lukashenko to prop up his illegitimate and repressive rule. And I continue to urge our own government to state publicly that the United States will not support any further IMF assistance to Belarus until we see credible political and economic reforms by Belarusian authorities, beginning with the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners in Belarus.

At the same time we are shocked and appalled by the cruelty and thuggishness of the Lukashenko regime, we should also take note of the remarkable courage and perseverance of the Belarusian people, who press on in their struggle for greater freedom and opportunity.

Over the past year, I have been honored to meet with Belarusian opposition leaders and activists. These conversations have been extremely powerful, as I have heard directly from the men and women who are facing repression on the front lines and looking for help from us in their noble struggle.

Today, I join my colleagues in saying to the brave people in Belarus who are striving to secure their fundamental freedoms: We have not and will not forget about you and your important cause. We remember your names. We will stand in solidarity with you and in support of you until you achieve your goal, which is a free and democratic Belarus. And we believe more than ever that the day will come when Belarus will be free.

The extraordinary revolutions that are taking place across the Middle East and north Africa should remind us all that the United States does best in the

world when we stand with our values and the people who share them. And there is much we can do to help the Belarusian people.

To begin with, we must work with our European allies to ensure that the financial and technical assistance we have pledged to the Belarusian opposition is disbursed and implemented as quickly as possible, particularly for groups operating inside of Belarus. And we in Washington must continue to engage with the Belarusian opposition and its emerging leaders, and lend them our support.

Let me conclude by saying that I do not know when Belarus will be free, but I have no doubt that someday it will be free. I am confident that the future of Belarus belongs not to Lukashenko and his thugs but to the Belarusian people.

Indeed, the future of Belarus belongs to the dissidents who are in jail or who are being harassed—to Ales Byalitski, the founder of Belarus' largest human rights organization who recently celebrated his 49th birthday in prison. It belongs to Alyaksandr Klaskouski, a 33-year-old former traffic police officer in Minsk who pleaded with security forces on December 19 not to use force against peaceful protestors and who himself stood between riot police and unarmed protestors. He, too, is now serving time in a maximum security prison for his efforts. The future of Belarus belongs also to Natalia Kaliada, the director of the Belarus Free Theatre, who was arrested on December 19 but continues to press on in her work—to fight dictatorship with art. Natalia does this, as she put it in January when she testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, because “we want our spectators to think. When people start thinking, this is the most terrifying thing for a dictator.”

The future of Belarus belongs to every Belarusian who seeks a brighter future for their country—a future of democracy and opportunity. And we stand with them in their cause on this anniversary of the December 19, 2010, election—and on every anniversary to come, until Belarus is free.

TRIBUTE TO MARK JICKLING, CRS

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, I want to recognize Mark Jickling, a dedicated public servant who has served as a financial economist with the Congressional Research Service and is retiring after nearly 33 years of providing expert analyses to the U.S. Congress on economic, finance and securities matters. He is widely respected in the Senate and House of Representatives, as well as among his CRS colleagues, for his broad knowledge and insights into financial and economic matters as well as his professionalism and collegiality. Thanks to his dedicated efforts, Congress has been better informed as it has sought to find legislative solutions to many of the

issues facing the United States financial system.

Mr. Jickling graduated from the University of California at Berkeley and started work at the Library of Congress part-time with the Collections Management Division. His dedication and intellect led to his becoming an expert in economic matters about which he consistently delivered comprehensive, insightful and helpful analyses. He rose through the ranks to become an economist reaching the level of specialist, the highest level of analyst at CRS. He headed the Banking, Insurance, Securities and Macroeconomic Policy Section in the Government and Finance Division of CRS from 2005 to 2007, in which he oversaw the work of a dozen other analysts and specialists. He is the author or co-author of 100 CRS reports and countless confidential memos.

Mr. Jickling has worked on some of the most significant securities and banking issues facing the country. He wrote the first CRS reports on the impacts of the September 11 attacks on the markets and on the Enron scandal. At that time, he also coordinated CRS' internal “Enron group.” He assisted senior Congressional staff as they formulated legislative responses to the corporate accountability scandals.

From the onset of the recent financial crisis, Mr. Jickling has been instrumental in assisting Congress as we addressed the serious banking and market problems facing the country. He provided expert analysis on a daily basis to the Banking Committee and to others in Congress on housing finance, non-bank financial intermediation, financial derivatives, exotic financial products and markets, and many other issues. His dedication was shown by his working nights and weekends during this period. He significantly contributed to the quality of legislation that ultimately was enacted and cooperated effectively with Members and their staffs to produce the legislation. He was exactly the right person at the right time.

Mr. Jickling retires from the CRS having set a standard of superior service and having assisted a generation of CRS analysts in developing their skills. He leaves CRS to spend more time with his family and pursue some of his other interests, including the professional performance of music. His many accomplishments will remain a fitting tribute to his career and character.

Mr. Jickling will be greatly missed. I wish him and his family all the best in the future.

TRIBUTE TO DON DIXON

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and honor Don Dixon, who is retiring from Senate service. Don has been a trusted advisor and dear friend for many years.

Approximately 15 years ago, I was blessed to have Don join my staff as my State director of agriculture. He