

of national soul-searching in the shadow of the Vietnam war and Watergate scandal. In the early 1970s, a series of abuses were revealed in the press, including an expose alleging that the CIA had been spying on antiwar activists around the country.

The American people were understandably outraged, and in response, the Senate convened a committee to conduct a comprehensive review of all intelligence activities.

The committee—under the chairmanship of Idaho Senator Frank Church, with Texas Senator John Tower as vice chairman—was comprised of 11 Senators and 133 dedicated staff members. Over the next 15 months, the staff poured over millions of CIA and FBI records to produce a 2,500-page report broken into 6 unique books, each covering a different topic including foreign assassinations, domestic spying, and an investigation into the killing of President Kennedy.

What they discovered was shocking, including vast abuses both domestic and abroad that showed the intelligence community operated outside the framework of the Constitution and undermined the Bill of Rights.

The committee found that, in the decades leading up to and including the 1970s, the CIA and FBI had been conducting a massive, illegal domestic spying operation, which included the following: The CIA opened and photographed over one-quarter million pieces of domestic mail, the FBI maintained extensive files on over half a million American citizens, and the NSA wiretapped all international calls from the United States and documented the callers.

In addition to mass data collection, the agencies conducted targeted operations as well. Civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., was the subject of an aggressive surveillance program overseen by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. Hoover sought to compile a detailed record of King's personal life in order to blackmail and delegitimize him as a public figure. King's phone was tapped without a warrant, for example.

The NAACP, Black Panthers, and antiwar groups were also all spied upon. In fact, President Eisenhower on several occasions received advanced copies of NAACP speeches from informants.

The abuses didn't stop at our border. The Church Committee uncovered evidence that the CIA had plotted or engaged in assisting in the assassination plots of the leaders of Cuba, the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Chile, and South Vietnam.

In the Congo, the CIA reached the final stages of a plot to assassinate Patrice Lumumba and had even delivered poison to its agents. However, before the plan was carried out, Lumumba was executed following a coup.

Most infamously, the United States conspired in numerous plots against

Fidel Castro, though none were ever carried out.

The public airing of these—and other—allegations shook our country and our partners abroad and prompted swift action by Congress and the executive branch.

On February 18, 1976, President Ford issued Executive Order No. 11905, banning all assassinations. The order has stood ever since.

Within months of the release of the Church Committee report, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence was formed by a vote of 72 to 22. The committee was established to conduct constant and vigorous oversight over the intelligence community.

In addition, in 1978, Congress passed the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act which established the FISA Court to oversee requests for intelligence warrants within the United States.

The Church Committee study revealed to the world the danger of allowing intelligence agencies to operate in the shadows and with unchecked power.

Our duty to conduct oversight is one I take very seriously. As the chairman of the Intelligence Committee from 2009 to 2015 and as vice chairman since 2015, I have undertaken this responsibility with the awareness that, without the efforts of the Church Committee, congressional oversight of the intelligence community would never have been possible. We must also remember that the Church Committee and its reports had their vocal and adamant opponents. Oversight is, at times, resisted, a fact we discovered firsthand in completing and declassifying as the Committee's Study of the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program.

The legacy of the Church Committee report lives on in the study the Intelligence Committee released in 2014.

The study reviewed over 6.3 million cables, emails, memoranda, and transcripts. It is a documentary history of the CIA's words and actions in the years during which the CIA conceived of, carried out, and made representations about its Detention and Interrogation Program. The public is familiar with the report's 500-page executive summary and findings and conclusions that were declassified and released. The full study is over 6,700 pages long and includes 38,000 footnotes. To this day, critics of the study have not demonstrated a single factual inaccuracy.

Among many revelations, the study showed that, contrary to the CIA's claims, the use of torture was brutal and did not result in otherwise unavailable intelligence that "saved lives." It also demonstrated that the CIA provided inaccurate information about the program to the White House, the Department of Justice, to Congress, and the public.

Much like the Church Committee report before it, the study demonstrated the important role oversight plays in securing our country's commitment to the rule of law.

The importance of the work the Church Committee did back in 1975 and 1976 cannot be understated. Our government operates on the basis of trust from the American people. The oath each of us take in public service is to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.

The actions of the intelligence community leading up to the Church Committee violated that trust and must never be repeated.

Senator Church and his committee, in shedding light on these dark times, helped right the ship of American democracy and set an important example for all future Members of this body of how to conduct vigilant and thorough oversight.

101ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the 101st anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

Between 1915 and 1923, the Ottoman Empire executed a deliberate massacre of more than 1.5 million Armenians. Over the course of 8 years, Armenians were marched to their deaths in the deserts of the Middle East, murdered in concentration camps, drowned at sea, and forced to endure unimaginable acts of brutality. These barbaric acts were systematic, methodical, and intentional.

More than 100 years have passed since the start of that horrific massacre, which an overwhelming number of academics and institutions have recognized as genocide, and there are countless testimonies from victims who lived to tell of their harrowing experiences.

Pope Francis called the massacre against the Armenians "the first genocide of the 20th century," declaring that "concealing or denying evil is like allowing a wound to keep bleeding without bandaging it."

However, despite an irrefutable body of evidence, the U.S. Government has refused to call the deliberate massacre of the Armenians by its rightful name: genocide.

For years, I have urged both Democratic and Republican administrations to acknowledge the truth of the Armenian genocide. Today I reiterate my call, and I hope that, this year, the United States will finally correct this century-old injustice.

By affirming the Armenian genocide, the United States would join more than 20 countries across the globe—including Russia, France, and Germany—as well as the Vatican and 43 U.S. States standing on the right side of history.

Recognizing the Armenian genocide is much more than a symbolic gesture. It will provide solace and relief to the descendants of the victims, particularly the hundreds of thousands of Armenian American citizens and residents. It will support a more equitable reconciliation between the Turkish and

Armenian people. And most importantly, it will reaffirm U.S. leadership in preventing and responding to similar atrocities and in advancing the rights of vulnerable populations around the world.

This year, as we take time to remember and honor the victims of the Armenian genocide, I hope the United States will finally stand on the right side of history and affirm the incontestable fact of the Armenian genocide.

TRIBUTE TO REAR ADMIRAL STEPHEN P. METRUCK

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I wish to honor U.S. Coast Guard RADM Stephen P. Metruck and highlight his service to country and his contribution to the State of Delaware. Rear Admiral Metruck retired on April 22 from commanding the Fifth Coast Guard District after 34 years in the U.S. Coast Guard. The fifth district includes North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, Delaware, Washington, DC, and much of Pennsylvania. Rear Admiral Metruck led 67 units made up of 2,475 Active Duty members, 1,010 Reservists, 6,800 auxiliary members, and 120 civilians.

One of Rear Admiral Metruck's most notable accomplishments occurred during his tenure at both Sector San Diego and Sector Seattle. In these dual roles, Rear Admiral Metruck was responsible for advancing Coast Guard operations in a post-9/11 environment. He forged interagency partnerships to enhance safety and security measures in each port and coordinated the sensors and systems into a common operational picture to allow all agencies to coordinate and understand potential threats in the maritime environment.

Rear Admiral Metruck and I got to know each other well during harsh, back-to-back winters that damaged navigation aids along the Delaware River, which assisted ships traveling to and from Wilmington, DE. From this experience, I learned that it is not easy budgeting for ice flows. Being an expert at budgeting and solving problems, he and his team forged solutions that replaced damaged buoys and aids to navigation without a huge burden on taxpayers. The result was ships could again travel safely to ports in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware.

Rear Admiral Metruck is a very humble man, and he will be the first to understate his contribution to the U.S. Coast Guard and leadership of the men and women under his command. Nevertheless, I have found him to be an extremely devoted public servant and skilled at working with other agencies, solving problems, and being responsive to inquiries from Senators.

Rear Admiral Metruck also spent 2½ years serving this great institution as a fellow with then-Senator John Kerry. He worked on policy issues related to the Commerce Subcommittee on Oceans and Fisheries and also supported Senator Kerry's staff on envi-

ronmental, maritime, and Coast Guard issues and legislation.

Prior to arriving at the Fifth Coast Guard District, he was the assistant commandant for resources and chief financial officer for the U.S. Coast Guard. During this assignment, he was responsible for all Coast Guard financial management and resource activities including planning, programming, budgeting, and execution of the service's \$10 billion annual appropriation.

While he has been a friend of commerce and the environment on the Delaware River, his career has resulted in him living in and serving a number of other States. He has served in Coast Guard Headquarters; Portsmouth, VA; Brownsville, TX; Tampa, FL; Buffalo, NY; San Diego, CA; and Puget Sound, WA. Rear Admiral Metruck also helped oversee Coast Guard missions across waterways encompassing the states of California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and the offshore waters of Mexico and Central America. Additionally, he served as U.S. Coast Guard Liaison to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in New York City.

Rear Admiral Metruck is from Massena, NY, and graduated in 1982 from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, where he earned a bachelor of science degree in ocean engineering. He was awarded a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He has also served as a military fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC, and the Coast Guard fellow on the Chief of Naval Operations' Strategic Studies Group based in Newport, RI.

There are many of us in this Chamber who have worked with him and his staff on important issues over the years. Today I express our collective gratitude to him for devoting his career to keeping us safe. I speak for many in the Senate, in Delaware, and around our Nation in wishing Rear Admiral Metruck and his wife Peggy Duxbury a great next chapter in their lives.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL MICHAEL FRANCIS

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, today I wish to honor a man who has served faithfully for 27 years in the U.S. Air Force, with the vast majority of that service in the Missouri Air National Guard. It is a big loss, but Col. Michael Francis is scheduled to depart the 131st Bomb Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base on May 15, 2016, after a long and distinguished record of service in the unit beginning July 28, 1998.

I think it is important to note that Colonel Francis has been associated with a unit whose history has spanned over nine decades and whose former members have included the likes of aviation pioneer Charles Lindbergh.

Colonel Francis commissioned in the U.S. Air Force in 1989 as a graduate of

the U.S. Air Force Academy and, after almost a decade, transitioned from Active Duty to the Air National Guard, continuing his dream of a career as a fighter pilot in the F-15 Eagle.

Throughout Colonel Francis's service at the 131st, he has seen the unit transition from the F-15, the Nation's premier homeland defense and air superiority aircraft, to the B-2, the Nation's lethal stealth bomber involved in global missions. Since being chosen to command the first B-2 Operations Group in the Air National Guard when the 131st transitioned from the F-15 Eagle to the B-2 Spirit, Colonel Francis has been a standout leader in the nuclear community. His achievements boast nothing less than perfection. As the present wing commander, Colonel Francis paved a new path for the National Guard by leading his unit to be the first bomb wing certified for full-spectrum nuclear operations and was entrusted with strategic nuclear deterrent operations for our country.

Throughout his long career at the 131st, Colonel Francis remained dedicated to the vital missions of the Air National Guard. However, he also never forgot his commitment to his wife, Jane, and sons, Greg and Brian.

While Colonel Francis might be leaving the 131st Bomb Wing, he will continue his selflessness in service to this great country. Colonel Francis will be reassigned to the Missouri National Guard Headquarters and promoted to brigadier general.

Again, I wish to extend Col. Michael J. Francis my sincere congratulations upon his new assignment and thanks for the years of service he has rendered to the 131st Bomb Wing, the State of Missouri, and the Nation.

ALASKA MISSION 6 HONOR FLIGHT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize six veterans from Alaska who are in Washington this week as part of the Alaska Mission 6 Honor Flight. These veterans are here to witness and experience our Nation's most hallowed memorials—built to honor their service and sacrifice and that of their brothers and sisters in arms.

On behalf of Alaska's congressional delegation, our State, and our country, I welcome these heroes to Washington and extend to them my sincere gratitude for their service.

Participating in the Alaska Mission 6 Honor Flight are John J. Boulette and William K. Zimmer, U.S. Navy veterans of the Korean war; Alexander Crockett Blanchard and Alfred Dawkins, U.S. Army veterans of the Vietnam war; Neal Henry Dallman, a U.S. Navy veteran of the Vietnam war; and Arnold Patrick McDonald, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam war.

Without the sacrifices of these six men and so many others, defending peace and liberty in some of the most dangerous corners of the world during