

support, both from Democrats and Republicans, precisely because of the importance of having a Secretary of State in place in this challenging world but also, again, because partisan differences should not be reflected to the outside. In this case, that has been lost in the name of the resistance.

When it comes to the critical position of Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, in particular, would be the man for the job as we deal with Russia, Iran, North Korea, Syria, and other challenges. I urge my Democratic colleagues to do the right thing for our country instead of catering to the most extreme elements of their party.

Most of my Senate colleagues supported Mike Pompeo when he was nominated to serve as CIA Director. They should support him now as Secretary of State so we can show the world that while we may have our political differences at home about any number of issues, we stand united as Americans when it comes to facing threats to our security abroad.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative 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, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Stuart Kyle Duncan, of Louisiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, Thom Tillis, John Cornyn, John Kennedy, Richard Burr, Mike Lee, David Perdue, Steve Daines, James Lankford, Pat Roberts, Johnny Isakson, Jeff Flake, Lindsey Graham, Patrick J. Toomey, Marco Rubio, Tom Cotton, James E. Risch.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Stuart Kyle Duncan, of Louisiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEIN-

STEIN), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 44, as follows:

#### [Rollcall Vote No. 81 Ex.]

#### YEAS—50

Alexander	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Capito	Heller	Rounds
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rubio
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Corker	Inhofe	Scott
Cornyn	Johnson	Shelby
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Crapo	Lankford	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Tillis
Daines	Manchin	Toomey
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young
Fischer	Murkowski	

#### NAYS—44

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Sanders
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Schatz
Booker	Jones	Schumer
Brown	Kaine	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Leahy	Tester
Casey	Markey	Udall
Coons	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Warner
Donnelly	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murray	Wyden
Harris	Peters	

#### NOT VOTING—6

Duckworth	Hirono	McCain
Feinstein	Isakson	Nelson

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 44.

The motion is agreed to.

The majority leader.

### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### CUBA

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, today I wish to address Cuba's undemocratic leadership transition and its implications for the Cuban people and U.S. foreign policy.

Today, in a highly scripted process, Cuba's National Assembly replaced Raul Castro, the country's gerontocratic dictator, with their apparent Miguel Diaz Canel. While this marks the first time in nearly 60 years that a Castro does not occupy the Cuban Presidency, this transition by no means portends the desperately needed political and economic change that Cubans desire, nor does it mean

that the Castro regime is no longer in charge.

This week's transition, characterized as a coronation and an attempt to institutionalize the Castro regime, is a ruse. This spectacle does not remotely come close to meeting internationally recognized standards for a democratic election. Cuba remains a single party, authoritarian state that denies its citizens their most fundamental freedoms.

Some contend that Mr. Diaz Canel could be a "Cuban Mikhail Gorbachev," and in seeking to reform the Castros' broken model, he will stumble into the collapse of Cuba's communist system. Such thinking fails to account for the fact that Mr. Diaz Canel's political ascent was forged under the same Communist Party that has perpetuated the Castros' decades-long stranglehold on Cuba.

More importantly, Raul Castro will maintain his position as the First Secretary of the Cuban Communist Party. As article 5 of Cuba's authoritarian constitution states, "The Communist Party of Cuba [. . .] is the superior ruling force of society and the State . . ." Under such a structure, does anyone honestly think that Raul Castro won't continue calling the shots while his handpicked dauphin occupies the role of President?

As this political farce unfolds, I want to make brief observations about three aspects of Raul Castro's legacy, the state of human rights in the country, the state of the Cuban economy, and the crisis in Venezuela, which Miguel Diaz Canel now owns.

Raul Castro will certainly leave an enduring human rights legacy. In the last 3 years, the Cuban Commission on Human Rights and National Reconciliation, Cuba's leading independent human rights organization, documented more than 20,000 arbitrary detentions of activists. Moreover, the State Department's 2016 Human Rights Report on Cuba stated that the Cuban Government routinely denies its citizens fair trials, monitors and censors private communications, suppresses freedoms of speech, assembly and press, and employs threats, physical assault and intimidation tactics against its own people.

Raul Castro's economic legacy will be the maintenance of the dual currency system that distorts the national economy and subjugates Cuban citizens to second-class status in their own country. Foreign companies seeking opportunities in Cuba are still forced to conduct business with the military and its vast network of shell companies. "Independent entrepreneurs" are a complete misnomer, as individuals continue to operate in a byzantine system that prevents them from owning their own companies and subjects them to licensing and tax requirements designed to stifle entrepreneurial activity.

Additionally, as well-connected members of the Cuban Communist

Party and the military use their positions for self-enrichment, average Cubans face a status quo of limited economic opportunities. As the gap between the “haves” and the “have nots” grows in Cuba, it appears that the Castros’ Orwellian dystopia is a system in which all Cubans are equal, but some Cubans are more equal than others.

Finally, looking outward, at the Summit of the Americas last week, where leaders of the Western Hemisphere grappled with an unprecedented migration and humanitarian crisis, Raul Castro may have been absent, but the legacy of ruin in Venezuela was front and center. In a July 2017 Senate hearing, Organization of American States Secretary General Luis Almagro described Cuba’s presence in Venezuela as an “occupation army.” While Nicolas Maduro clings to his failed ideological, military, and economic alliance with the Castro regime, Venezuelans are suffering from food shortages, a collapsed healthcare system, and rampant crime.

This brutal reality is the Castros’ legacy for the Cuban people and the hemisphere. In his role as First Vice President since 2013, Mr. Diaz Canel has been Raul Castro’s first accomplice. So while Cubans will never stop dreaming for a future in which they are guaranteed human rights and are truly free to pursue economic prosperity, they know that Mr. Diaz Canel represents little more than a continuation of the Castro regime.

Turning to U.S. foreign policy, to those who would argue Cuba is ready to be a member of the community of nations, let me point to the attacks against American diplomats in Havana. U.S. personnel have faced an unprecedented ordeal. More than 50 unexplained attacks have affected more than two dozen American citizens, with some cases involving lasting, physical brain damage. Let anyone who harbors doubts about these incidents refer to the Trudeau government’s announcement this week regarding incidents affecting Canadian officials and changes to Canada’s diplomatic presence in Cuba. These attacks are real. People are suffering.

Cuban officials attempting to dismiss these egregious attacks is yet another sign of the disingenuous nature of the dictatorship. Whether the attacks were perpetrated by Cuban intelligence services or involve the participation of another country’s intelligence services, it is unfathomable that a government that prides itself on running a police state would even try to feign ignorance about these incidents. I refuse to accept the premise that members of the Castro regime are not in some way complicit or have no information about who is responsible. The State Department must continue its investigation of these attacks.

The Trump administration must also move beyond Presidential promises towards a substantive strategy that pressures the regime to undertake serious

reforms to advance democratic values and human rights and end its support of failed leadership in Venezuela.

First, the United States must remain steadfast in supporting democratic activists in Cuba. While President Trump claims to support those fearlessly advocating for their rights, his budget proposals tell a different story. Alarmingly, his fiscal year 2018 request to Congress proposed zero dollars for democracy programs in Cuba, while his fiscal year 2019 budget only requested \$10 million. In contrast to his statements, this amounts to rejecting support for the Cuban people and our interests.

Additionally, as the U.S. Government hones new tools to advance accountability for human rights violations, we should utilize targeted global Magnitsky sanctions to put a spotlight on the Cuban officials responsible for these abuses.

Second, although senior administration officials have been critical of business deals with the Cuban military that enrich the Castro regime in the process, the regulations the administration introduced in November 2017 fail to address key elements of commerce that benefit Cuba’s dictatorship. In the coming weeks, I will launch a congressional review of Treasury and Commerce regulations in order to end unnecessary loopholes that benefit the regime.

Finally, as leaders from the Americas and Europe come together to address the multifaceted crisis in Venezuela, they must seriously confront Cuba’s role in Venezuela’s collapse. To date, efforts to coordinate increased international pressure on the Venezuelan Government have given the Castro regime a free pass. There was widespread support in the hemisphere for Peru’s decision to not invite Nicolas Maduro to the Summit of the Americas due to the authoritarian nature of his government; yet no one, including the Trump administration, held Cuba’s dictatorship to the same standard. It is time for the administration to reverse this trend and call for a coordinated diplomatic response to Cuba’s longstanding role in Venezuela’s emergence as a failed state.

In closing, I urge my colleagues join me in speaking out against the undemocratic political spectacle in Cuba this week. We must join together to pursue a comprehensive policy towards Cuba that pressures regime officials to loosen their stranglehold on Cuba’s economy and political system and that advances the true democratic and justice reforms the Cuban people so desperately desire.

#### 103RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, this week we solemnly observe the 103rd anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

Over a century ago, one of the greatest tragedies of the 20th century began

when the Young Turk leaders of the Ottoman Empire executed more than 200 prominent Armenians. What followed was an 8-year systematic campaign of oppression and massacre. By 1923, an estimated 1.5 million Armenians were killed, and over a half a million survivors were exiled.

These atrocities affected the lives of every Armenian living in Asia Minor and, indeed, across the globe. The U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire during this dark time, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., unsuccessfully pleaded with President Wilson to take action and later remembered the events of the genocide, saying, “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.” Clearly, the suffering of the Armenian people must never be forgotten.

The survivors of the Armenian genocide, however, persevered due to their unbreakable spirit and steadfast resolve and went on to greatly contribute to the lands in which they found new homes and communities, including the United States. That is why we not only commemorate this grave tragedy each year, but we also take this moment to celebrate the traditions, the contributions, as well as the bright future of the Armenian people. Indeed, my home State of Rhode Island continues to be enriched by our strong and vibrant Armenian-American community.

This genocide has been denied for far too long. To honor the memory of this tragedy, I have joined with several of my colleagues on resolutions over the years to encourage the U.S. to officially recognize the Armenian genocide.

As we remember the past, we remain committed to forging a brighter future. We must continue to guard against hatred and oppression so that we can prevent such crimes against humanity.

As ranking member on the Senate Armed Services Committee, I remain committed to supporting assistance to Armenia to strengthen security, promote economic growth, and foster democratic reforms and development.

We must find a way to come together to recognize the truth of what happened and to provide unwavering support and assistance to those facing persecution today.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

#### CONGRATULATING CONGRESSIONAL YOUTH CABINET PARTICIPANTS

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize 32 Arkansans who have taken an interest in playing a positive, productive role in their communities, the State of Arkansas, and our country.

In September, this group of high school students convened as part of my