

carefully monitored and manipulated by the ruling regime to prevent challenges to their authority.

The last few days seem somewhat different. The tens of thousands of people lining the streets of Tehran—in an incredible rebuttal to the ruling powers—want to know that the votes they did cast are counted properly. The deliberate lack of transparency in the vote tabulation and the blatant attempts to block mass communications among citizens, particularly youth, are too glaring to ignore. Even Supreme Leader Khamenei has been forced to backtrack on his immediate approval of the results and has called for at least the appearance of a recount in some disputed areas.

Americans know something about wanting to have their votes counted accurately. The difference between our two nations: when the results of a U.S. election were in dispute, the world spotlight shined bright on the process and the people involved in resolving the conflict—peacefully. Transparency and openness is not a hallmark of Iranian elections.

Even before the presidential election took place, Iran's totalitarian regime blocked personal communications like texting and access to the Internet. Media have been confined to Tehran, if they haven't been asked to leave the country. The regime's ongoing attempts to curtail communication and silence protests—often with brutal force—demonstrate the regime's fear of losing a grip on power.

Allegations of a fraudulent vote count are a symptom of a regime that has survived by an authoritarian power structure that oppresses its people. On June 12, the people of Iran did not vote for the Supreme Leader of their country. Under the current system, the Supreme Leader and his supporters will continue to dictate policy to the President of Iran, regardless of who that president is and whatever policy decisions the president is authorized to make.

The people of Iran want their voices to be heard and they should be assured that the world is listening. I urge those in power in Iran also to listen and implement the reforms necessary to allow the will of the people to be expressed.

I look forward to a future when the people of Iran have an opportunity for a free and fair election of leaders of their choosing. It is my sincere hope that one day this vision will be realized, and the voice of the Iranian people will truly be heard.

I yield the floor and 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. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. SHAHEEN.) Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

HAITI REFORESTATION ACT OF 2009

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, in December 2008, Senator BINGAMAN, Congressman MEEK, and I visited Haiti. We went to see the public health, economic, environmental, and political situation in that impoverished Caribbean nation.

We traveled for hours into rural Haiti to the town of Cange to observe the incredible work being done by Partners in Health providing AIDS treatment and teaching mothers with newborns how to purify water.

We visited a school in Cite de Solei—a teeming slum in the capital Port au Prince—where Father Hagan and the organization Hands Together is providing schooling and meals for some of Haiti's most vulnerable children.

Unfortunately, despite these programs and the efforts of U.N. peacekeeping forces to bring some measure of security, the living conditions for average Haitians remain desperate: It is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with nearly 80 percent of its population out of work; one-half of its 8.2 million people live in extreme poverty; Haiti's infant mortality rate is the highest in our hemisphere; 1 in 10 children dies before the age of 5 due to malnutrition; the HIV/AIDS situation in Haiti is among the most frightening in the world; the average life expectancy of a citizen of Haiti is 61 years, the lowest in the region.

To add to these already desperate conditions, Haiti has been devastated in recent years by tropical storms and hurricanes. In 2004, Hurricane Jeanne struck Haiti, killing nearly 3,000 residents, and displacing over 200,000 more.

Last year, the island of Hispaniola, which Haiti shares with the Dominican Republic, was hit by four major storms. These storms caused massive flooding and landslides that cut off land routes and hampered the delivery of aid to its desperate citizens. Nearly 800 Haitians lost their lives and as many as 1 million were left homeless.

The world quickly responded to these catastrophes with millions of dollars worth of emergency food aid and disaster assistance. The United States alone provided \$29 million in aid. This assistance helped Haiti cope with these immediate challenges.

But one of the underlying causes of this devastation—and contributor to Haiti's larger challenge with poverty and disease—is the deforestation of the country's once plentiful tropical forests.

This satellite image provided by NASA shows the stark difference be-

tween the amount of forest cover in Haiti and the Dominican Republic—countries that share the same island.

The black line shows the border between the two nations. When you look at the lush green of the Dominican Republic and compare it to the stark desolation on Haiti's side of the border, it is easy to see why Haiti is so much more vulnerable than the Dominican Republic to the devastating effects of soil erosion, landslides, and flooding.

It was not always that way. In fact, 85 years ago Haiti's tropical forest covered 60 percent of the country. Today less than 2 percent of those forests remain. In the past 5 years, the deforestation rate has accelerated by more than 20 percent.

Some 30 million trees are cut down every year in Haiti. This staggering level of deforestation happens because 60 percent of the population of Haiti relies on charcoal produced from cutting down trees for cooking fuel and two-thirds rely on inefficient, small-scale subsistence farming for survival.

While understandable, this deforestation has had terrible, unintended consequences. The soil erosion that has resulted from cutting down all of these trees has had the perverse effect of substantially reducing Haiti's already scarce agricultural land and leaving what remains less productive.

This soil erosion also makes the island more vulnerable to floods and mudslides like the ones that devastated the country last year. The reality of this effect is that far more Haitians than Dominicans lost their lives and their homes during last year's storms.

Haiti's tropical forests, if protected and re-grown, would fight the destructive effects of soil erosion. Saving old and growing new tropical forests would help protect Haiti's freshwater sources from contaminants, safeguard Haiti's remaining irrigable land, and save lives during hurricane season. Helping Haiti deal with its deforestation is something we can help do.

Today, Senator BROWNBACK joins me in introducing the Haiti Reforestation Act of 2009 in an effort to attack this deforestation. The bill aims to end within 5 years deforestation in Haiti and restore within 30 years the extent of tropical forest cover in existence in Haiti in 1990.

While it is important to start putting trees in the ground, this bill is about more than just planting trees. Our government has tried that approach in the past and has failed miserably.

This bill brings the expertise of the both the US AID and the International Programs Office of the US Department of Agriculture's Forest Service to help Haiti manage in a measurable, verifiable, and reportable way its conservation and reforestation efforts. It does this in three ways.

First, the bill empowers these agencies to work with the Haitian Government to develop Haiti-appropriate forest-management ideas that can be implemented in an incremental way.

Second, the bill seeks to bring to Haiti market-based reforestation projects that have been successful in other regions of the world. These projects are successful because they share certain characteristics. They: secure the cooperation and engagement of local communities and organizations; provide incentives to protect trees through sustainable, yet income-generating growth; and provide hands-on management and oversight of replanting efforts.

Conservation groups such as Planting Empowerment, which is doing just this type of work in Panama, provide a model of success and this bill will encourage such groups to bring their efforts to Haiti.

Third, the bill expands the ability of conservation groups to work with the Haitian Government and international creditors to trade Haiti's international debt for revenue in what are known as debt-for-nature swaps.

Groups such as Conservation International, World Wildlife Fund, and The Nature Conservancy have successfully used this mechanism globally to save other tropical forests—this bill will encourage such groups to bring their efforts to Haiti.

Preservation of what remains of Haiti's tropical forest, and helping re-grow some of what has been lost, has numerous benefits for all of us, not just for Haiti. Tropical forests: play a critical role as carbon sinks to reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere; harbor a major portion of the Earth's biological and terrestrial resources; and provide habitats for an estimated 10 to 30 million plant and animal species, including species essential to medical research and agricultural productivity.

But attacking the desperate effect of deforestation in Haiti is the main purpose of this bill. As Haiti's Prime Minister, Michèle Pierre-Louis, recently said:

The whole country is facing an ecological disaster. We cannot keep going on like this. We are going to disappear one day. There will not be 400, 500 or 1,000 deaths [from hurricanes]. There are going to be a million deaths.

We must act to ensure that that day never comes. I urge my colleagues to support the Haiti Reforestation Act of 2009.

234TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.S. ARMY

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Madam President, on June 14, we celebrate the 234th birthday of the U.S. Army. For more than two centuries, the Army has fought to preserve the principles of democracy both here in the United States and around the globe.

It was 234 years ago today that the U.S. Army was established to defend our Nation. From the Revolutionary War to operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, our soldiers have served with honor and a deep commitment to our Nation's core values and beliefs.

In 1946, during an Army Day speech in Chicago, GEN Dwight D. Eisenhower said:

This day of tribute to the men and women of the United States Army is a day of national rededication to the ideals they served so well. The Army believes in strength without arrogance; in firmness without discourtesy; in loyalty without servility. It lives with pride in its cherished traditions of service to our commander-in-chief and to the people to whom it belongs.

This quote is as true today as it was then. Our all-volunteer force has performed superbly during these challenging times and has lived up to and exceeded our greatest expectations.

This Army birthday is special because it is also the Year of the Non Commissioned Officer. Since 1775, the Army has set apart its NCOs from other enlisted soldiers by distinctive insignia of grade.

Throughout the Army's history, the noncommissioned officer corps has distinguished itself as the world's most accomplished group of military professionals. Historical and daily accounts of life as an NCO are exemplified by acts of courage and a dedication and a willingness to do whatever it takes to complete the mission.

I also pay tribute to the families of our Army soldiers who give so much of their lives for our Nation. The important role families play is vital to the Army's success. They have our Nation's deepest appreciation for the support and devotion they provide to our men and women in uniform.

Today I wish to celebrate the strength of our Nation and the strength of our Army by saluting our noncommissioned officer corps and the Army's soldiers, families and civilians by wishing them a happy 234th birthday!

THANKS TO BERMUDA

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, last Thursday Bermuda welcomed to freedom four men who had been wrongly detained at Guantanamo Bay for more than 7 years. The men are ethnic Uighurs—a minority group from western China that has long suffered discrimination and oppression by China's Government. Their release is welcome news—our own Federal courts had cleared them for release, as did both the Bush and Obama administrations. Bermudian Prime Minister Dr. Ewart Brown and the Bermudian people have done a humanitarian service, and should be praised for it.

I strongly support President Obama's decision to close Guantanamo, which became a rallying cry for al-Qaida and other terrorist groups seeking recruits. I am disappointed that the United States did not find a way to resettle the Uighurs here, as there are Uighur communities in several States that would have welcomed them and helped them become productive members of society. It would also have been an important gesture to other countries that

we are asking to accept Guantanamo detainees. All the more reason that we should offer our sincere thanks to Bermuda for helping to put this sorry episode behind us.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

COMMENDING THE GATTON ACADEMY OF MATH AND SCIENCE

• Mr. BUNNING. Madam President, I would like to take this time to congratulate the Gatton Academy of Math and Science in Bowling Green, KY.

Newsweek magazine recently published a list of schools recognized for challenging students. Separate from the top 1,500 public high schools in the country, Newsweek magazine published its list of 15 schools known as the Public Elites. The Gatton Academy of Math and Science was one of the distinguished 15 members of this list and marks the first time a school from Kentucky has earned a spot among the Public Elites.

The Gatton Academy of Math and Science is a selected group of high school juniors and seniors from around Kentucky who attend the Western Kentucky University. Their selection is based on test scores, grades, and submitted essays. Students in the program earn college credit at the Western Kentucky University in addition to completing their high school education.

As a supporter of education, I appreciate the opportunity to recognize the performance of this great educational facility.●

COMMENDING NORTH OLDHAM HIGH SCHOOL

• Mr. BUNNING. Madam President, I would like to take this time to congratulate North Oldham High School in Goshen, KY.

Newsweek magazine recently published a list of the top 1,500 public schools in the country. The 15 schools that made the list from Kentucky rank among the top 6 percent of public schools in the Nation. What is even more impressive is that Kentucky had three more schools ranked this year than in 2008, showing improvement in our State's schools. Placing as one of 15 schools from Kentucky on this list, North Oldham High School has earned national recognition for the fine performance of its students and faculty.

I am proud of the students of North Oldham High School. Their commitment to education is a fine example for the entire Commonwealth, and I take pride in recognizing them on the floor of the Senate.●

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF REVILLO, SOUTH DAKOTA

• Mr. THUNE. Madam President, today I recognize Revillo, SD. Founded in 1884, the town of Revillo will celebrate its 125th anniversary this year.