Years ago when violence was raging in Darfur I regularly came to the floor to try to keep the world's attention on the calamities happening in that far corner of the world.

Fortunately, after a number of years and constant international pressure, a sizeable international peacekeeping force was deployed in Darfur, and over time the worst of the violence largely subsided.

Meanwhile a fragile peace treaty—the Comprehensive Peace Agreement or CPA—also started to bring an end to a devastating civil war between North and South Sudan that killed and displaced millions. I give President George W. Bush credit for seeing that important agreement to fruition.

A key CPA provision called for an independence referendum for the southern half of Sudan. This referendum occurred in January and was largely peaceful and without incident.

The South voted overwhelmingly for independence, which the North agreed to respect. And on Saturday, amid widespread celebration and a host of visiting international dignitaries, South Sudan became the world's newest country.

Last year Senator SHERROD BROWN and I visited Sudan. I wanted to see the country—and the new one about to emerge—with my own eyes.

The South faces a daunting task—building a nation that can be responsive to the needs of its 8 million residents, writing a constitution, and creating a functional government.

The people of South Sudan, who have seen so much suffering after years of civil war, deserve this chance at a peaceful and democratic nation—and the international community should help it get started and remain viable and stable.

The people of the North face challenges too, including a fragile economy and a dwindling of the Nile River due to climate change.

And despite the peaceful independence process for the South, many complicated issues related to borders, oil revenues, and immigration still remain to be worked out between both sides.

The Obama administration, including its special envoy Ambassador Princeton Lyman, has been working diligently to help resolve these very thorny issues.

Unfortunately, we have seen a rash of new violence in a number of border areas between North and South Sudan.

With much of the world's attention turned elsewhere, we must not let new violence undermine the hard fought gains that have been achieved in Sudan.

First, in May the Sudanese armed forces invaded the disputed oil-rich Abyei region, displacing as many as 100,000.

Fortunately, both sides met recently in Ethiopia and agreed to withdraw their forces from the region. The U.N. Security Council also voted to send a 4,200-person Ethiopian peacekeeping force there for 6 months to protect civilians and humanitarian workers.

These are steps in the right direction, and I urge both sides to respect the agreement and work to negotiate a long-term solution to Abyei that will allow its people to live in peace.

More recently there has been a new outbreak of violence—one with disturbing similarities to the violence in Darfur—in an area called Southern Kordofan.

Most people have probably never heard of Southern Kordofan—an area that borders South Sudan and is one of the few major oil-producing regions in the north.

During the North-South civil war, segments of the population supported the south and tensions remain today as a result. Southern Kordofan has a certain degree of autonomy and recently held separate state elections, yet there were allegations of election rigging in favor of North Sudan.

In early June, the North Sudanese government sent troops into the Nuba region in Southern Kordofan to disarm individuals sympathetic to the South—resulting in the displacement of more than 70,000. Humanitarian aid was blocked and U.N. staff harassed and detained.

And there have been allegations of targeted aerial bombing and house to house violence on the Nuba mountain people that are of grave concern.

North Sudan stands to lose sizable revenue from Southern independence and Southern Kordofan is one of the North's major sources of oil revenue. Many have speculated about the timing of the attacks—so close to Southern independence—but I am not going to dwell on motives because what matters most is that the aggression stops.

Two weeks ago both sides signed an African Union-mediated agreement to find a ''peaceful resolution of their differences . . . cease hostilities, permit humanitarian access, and allow the return of displaced persons to their homes.''

I hope this agreement is respected. The last thing the people of North or South Sudan need is more human suffering and displacement.

There must be an immediate cessation of hostilities and end to harassment of U.N. staff in Southern Kordofan.

Both sides must follow through with commitments to demilitarize Abyei.

Humanitarian agencies must have safe an unrestricted access to the areas.

And it is long overdue that the various parties in the Darfur conflict reach a long-term political settlement that will allow people to be safe and to return to their homes.

Continued progress on all these fronts is also the best path forward for improving Sudan's relations with the United States and the rest of the global community.

President Obama has called on Sudanese leaders to choose peace, and I strongly echo his sentiments.

EXTENDING THE TERM OF FBI DIRECTOR ROBERT MUELLER

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise to speak in strong support of S. 1103, the legislation before the Senate to extend the term of Robert Mueller, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

This is an important piece of legislation because without it, Director Mueller's term will end very soon, as he completes his 10 years in office.

That would leave the FBI, the Nation's leading law enforcement agency and the lead intelligence agency for domestic counterterrorism, without a Director as we approach the 10th anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

This would be unacceptable in my view. Unfortunately, unanimous consent to pass this legislation, S. 1103, is being held up. I urge my colleagues to approve this bill quickly.

Earlier this year, the President conducted a search for a replacement for Director Mueller. He determined that the best choice for the nation, at this critical time, was not to replace him, but rather to seek a legislative extension to Director Mueller's term.

The Judiciary Committee held a hearing with Director Mueller on June 8, 2011, and has considered the text of this legislation, S. 1103. Under a proposed unanimous consent agreement circulated earlier this month, passage of this legislation would be followed by the President's formal nomination of Mr. Mueller for an additional 2 years, and the nomination will be placed directly on the Senate's Executive Calendar.

I do not know of any Senator who does not respect and support Director Mueller. Over the past 10 years that he has been in office, Robert Mueller has provided steady leadership and stability at the FBI. He has worked to transform the Bureau into an agency that can better detect and prevent terrorist attacks against the United States.

Under Mueller's direction, the FBI has played an essential role in more than 20 significant counterterrorism operations, while infiltrating and arresting groups of individuals charged with planning attacks against our country.

The FBI has also built its cyber investigation capability, focused on counterintelligence, investigated public corruption cases, and tracked and disrupted gang activity.

Despite the major setback of the September 11 attacks, the FBI is among our most respected government institutions, and it has changed dramatically to respond to the challenges of our time.

Let me talk about Director Mueller for a moment, who is, personally, a symbol of integrity and dedicated public service. I am very pleased to call him my friend, and thank him for his willingness to continue to serve for another 2 years.

I recognize that there were good reasons that Congress placed a term limit on the Director of the FBI. History has shown that the position, and the FBI, wield enormous powers and that the Bureau should not have a director for life.

The legislation before us recognizes that concern, and creates a one-time extension that would only apply to Director Mueller. Future FBI Directors would still be limited to a 10-year term.

Extending Director Mueller's term at the FBI for an additional 2 years will ensure the evolution of the FBI continues. It will provide important stability to the President's national security team during this sensitive and challenging time and while it is otherwise going through important leadership changes.

This summer Leon Panetta has succeeded Robert Gates as Secretary of Defense, and GEN David Petraeus has been confirmed to be the next Director of the CIA, but because he is transitioning out of Afghanistan, General Petraeus won't arrive at Headquarters in Langley until after Labor Day.

We are seeing changes in major military commands, and changes in the Joint Chiefs of Staff are coming soon. Also, the Senate Intelligence Committee, which I have the honor of chairing, is now considering the nomination of Matt Olsen to be the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, NCTC, because Mike Leiter stepped down as the head of NCTC on July 8.

So in the midst of this change, Director Mueller will be an experienced, steady hand among the President's national security advisers. The American people will be well-served having him in place.

I support the legislation and urge its adoption. Now is not the time to keep it from passing.

OBJECTION TO CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 872

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I have filed a formal objection to the consideration of H.R. 872, a bill to exempt pesticide applications from coverage under the Clean Water Act. I rise today to explain the reasoning for my opposition to this bill.

H.R. 872 is based on the notion that the law governing the licensing of pesticides provides all the environmental safeguards that are necessary. In proponents' view, obtaining a Clean Water Act permit would be duplicative. That is incorrect.

As chairman of the Water and Wildlife Subcommittee of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, I have serious concerns about how pesticide pollution is impacting human health, natural resources and the economies that depend on them.

Today, more than 1,800 waterways in the United States are known to be impaired because of pesticide pollution. Limited water quality sampling suggests the number is actually much higher. In a nationwide study conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey, more than half of the streams sampled had concentrations of at least one pesticide that exceeded a guideline for the protection of aquatic life. In California alone, more than one in four of the State's waters are officially listed as impaired because of pesticide pollution.

Chesapeake Bay is the most biologically diverse estuary in the country and serves as a vital economic resource to the region. One recent study found that portions of the bay with higher concentrations of pesticide pollution exhibited decreased species diversity and reported a ''surprising number'' of such sites in the lower bay. Pesticide pollution in the Chesapeake has been linked to fish kills and abnormalities. Moreover, extensive samples taken from Chesapeake tributaries displayed a range of pesticides and herbicides. Atrazine, one of Maryland's most used herbicides, was detected in every water sample taken. The active ingredient in atrazine is resistant to natural degradation in water and inhibits photosynthesis in plants. The USGS found that concentrations of atrazine commonly found in agricultural streams and rivers produced reproduction and development abnormalities.

Pesticides, by their very nature, consist of various toxins. They are regulated under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, FIFRA, to determine if they are generally safe to use. The law is not designed to deal with the many real-world instances in which those ''general'' conditions are not applicable.

Pesticide pollution can cause severe reproductive and developmental harm and even death. Even at levels that allow for the product to be registered, pesticides may cause health problems in fish, amphibians and other aquatic species. Additionally, pesticide pollution can affect human health through contaminated drinking water and bioaccumulation in those that eat contaminated fish.

These pollution levels are the result of massive releases of pesticides that are having adverse environmental impacts that go far beyond what is regulated under the general application rule in FIFRA. We need FIFRA, but we also need the Clean Water Act.

Approval of a pesticide under FIFRA only requires that the active chemical ''will not generally cause unreasonable adverse effects on the environment.''

Clean Water Act permits, on the other hand, are approved based on a pesticide's impact on a specific waterway. It takes into account the water body specific context including specific uses, such as swimming and fishing, and whether significant fish species rely on the waters. Additionally, Clean Water Act permits place enforceable limits on the amount and type of pollutants that can be discharged.

FIFRA registration is not an acceptable substitute for water discharge permits. The localized impact assessment and enforceable discharge limits of Clean Water Act permits are far better equipped to address water quality issues than FIFRA's nationwide cost-benefit-based assessment. To exempt pesticides from comprehensive regulation would unreasonably compromise the quality of our waterways.

Clearly, the Nation has a problem with pesticide pollution in our waters that needs to be addressed. The courts have said so, and scientific data reinforce that conclusion. That doesn't mean that every backyard application of a weed-killer needs a Clean Water Act permit. Providing targeted exemptions of de minimis users of pesticides makes good sense. Generally speaking, backyard applicators and local lawn care companies should be exempt from coverage. Regulating these users would do little to improve water quality and would be an unnecessary burden on them. Emergency applications to control mosquito outbreaks associated with West Nile virus or a new outbreak of gypsy moth, for example, should be allowed. Permits could be obtained after-the-fact in these emergency situations without penalty. Agricultural applications to land should continue to be exempt. Permits should be easy to obtain and impose minimal monitoring, recordkeeping, and reporting requirements.

H.R. 872 simply goes too far, providing blanket exemptions and ignoring the real water quality problems that pesticides are causing in America's waters today. I support a more balanced approach.

The Clean Water Act has resulted in tremendous successes in preserving and restoring U.S. waterways, but many of our waterways are still impaired and require further attention. To categorically exempt pesticides from Clean Water Act permitting would be a step backwards in our nationwide efforts to ensure our waterways are healthy and safe. We can do better.

REMEMBERING BETTY FORD

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I ask my colleagues to honor the memory of one of our Nations' great leaders, former First Lady Betty Ford. Mrs. Ford passed away on July 8, 2011, at the age of 93. She leaves behind a legacy of candor, service, equal rights for all and a strong record of bipartisanship.

Elizabeth Ann Bloomer was born in Chicago, IL, on April 8, 1918, to William Stephenson Bloomer and Hortense Neahr. She had two older brothers, William and Robert Bloomer. When she was young, the family moved to Grand Rapids, MI, where she spent her childhood.

Dance was a passion of hers from a young age. While performing in Grand Rapids, she met Martha Graham, who