

an Iraqi government is forming based on the voters' selections, as a new government is in place in the Palestinian Authority, and in Afghanistan.

One of the President's greatest virtues, in my opinion, is his humility, and the recognition that we serve at the voters' behest is the fundamental virtue of leadership in a democracy.

To recognize that humility is to accept the responsibility that democratic leadership must always be open and transparent and compelling to the electorate.

Over the past 4 years, President Bush has often spoken directly and honestly to the American people, about the uncertain threats before us, and about the responsibilities we need to shoulder to defend our freedoms.

At the beginning of my remarks I said that one of the most fundamental political freedoms is the freedom to choose your government.

An even more basic political freedom is the freedom from tyranny or terror.

To be secure from the carbombers, from the dreaded knock on the door in the middle of the night, from the capricious order of the dictator, are necessary for freedom to be sustained.

Last night the President again stated his vision of how our security is dependent on expanding the zone of freedom to regions of the world where for too long threats to our security incubated.

Iraq will never be fully free until the Iraqi people can provide for their own security, and the President made it plainly clear again last night that our mission will not be finished until we have trained an effective Iraqi force to assume their security. To leave before then, or to announce a departure before we know we have achieved this goal, is to undermine our mission and devalue our sacrifices.

Those who call for an exit date before knowing we have succeeded care not for our success nor our security.

We know there remains much work to be done. No one called for an exit date before we had victory in World War II, a war where America made enormous sacrifices, including my only brother.

No one called for an exit strategy during the twilight years of the Cold War.

No one, after the collapse of the Soviet Empire, set an exit date for our efforts to support democratic transition in central and eastern Europe. We build our policies on victory, magnanimity, democracy and freedom.

While we will not set an exit date, we do have an exit strategy; that is, once we have trained enough security people and police people to take over and to protect and care for their own country, once we have helped to bring up their structure, witnessing that there is a degree of security, peace, and freedom in Iraq beyond where it is now, we are going to pull our young men and women out of there. Let us hope that happens sooner rather than later.

Listening to President Bush's speech last night, I know he understands how to protect America's security. Even more, he understands America's role in a challenging world. President Bush has charted a course as bold as he is, and it is incumbent upon the Congress and the American people to support him in this most important effort.

BLACK DAY IN CAMBODIA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today was yet another black day in Cambodia's history and for freedom. However, given the nature of the current regime nobody should be surprised by this latest assault on liberty.

Behind closed doors, the country's rubber-stamp National Assembly executed the devious plan of FUNCINPEC Party head Norodom Ranariddh and CPP hardline Prime Minister Hun Sen to undermine the democratic opposition led by Sam Rainsy.

In a series of secret votes, Rainsy and SRP parliamentarians Chea Poch and Cheam Channy were stripped of their parliamentary immunity. The three now face trumped up charges that place their fates in the hands of a corrupt government that is infamous for its human rights abuses and injustices against the Cambodian people.

This is outrageous and unacceptable.

It should now be clear to everyone that Norodom Ranariddh has cast his lot with CPP hardliners. This is a slight against all FUNCINPEC members who continue to support democracy and justice in Cambodia, and a grave dishonor to those who have given their lives in the struggle for freedom.

The State Department has been following the situation closely, and I commend the efforts of Ambassador Charles Ray and his staff for promoting reason and the rule of law during this latest charade. I encourage the State Department to respond in a forceful and appropriate manner, including compiling a list of those individuals who voted to strip the immunity of SRP members. They and their family members should be prohibited from entering the United States. Such action is consistent with the President's Proclamation of January 12, 2004.

I encourage other donors to publicly condemn the actions of the National Assembly, and to consider sanctions against the Cambodian government. Any activities with the National Assembly should be immediately and indefinitely suspended.

Donors should know by now that there is no progress or development in Cambodia without democracy—and what little democracy existed prior to the votes has been stripped away. An opportunity exists for the tough talk of donors during the last consultative group meeting to be followed by concrete actions. They must not miss it.

I strongly advise all international financial institutions—particularly the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank—to add their voice to their

chorus of concern and to consider a suspension of operations in Cambodia until the corrupt leaders get the message that tyranny will not be tolerated.

Those who have pledged resources for the Khmer Rouge tribunal may now want to reconsider—the actions of the National Assembly underscore that there is no justice in Cambodia today. It is ludicrous to believe that the country's legal system, even with outside participation, will function in a professional and independent manner. Let me be clear that justice is unquestionably needed for the millions of victims of the Khmer Rouge genocide in the 1970s, but justice is also needed for more recent crimes in Cambodia, including the 1997 grenade attack against Sam Rainsy and his supporters and the murders of Om Radsady and Chea Vichea.

Finally, I encourage King Norodom Sihamoni to find his voice during this political crisis. The world awaits an indication of the character and priorities of the new monarch.

Hun Sen and Ranariddh underestimate the resolve of the United States, as articulated by President Bush in his inaugural address and again last night, to stand by those championing freedom and liberty. Today, we stand with Sam Rainsy, Chea Poch and Cheam Channy and add our voices to their demands for democracy and justice. I hold Hun Sen and Ranariddh responsible for the security and the safety of these individuals—now and in the future.

As Chairman of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee, I would remind Cambodian officials that my staff and I will be putting together the fiscal year 2006 foreign aid bill over the coming weeks and months. Hun Sen and Ranariddh should know that Washington—and the world—are watching.

DEATH OF GEORGIAN PRIME MINISTER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I take a moment to share with the Senate the very sad news from Georgia this morning that Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania has died in what Georgian officials are calling an accident.

According to government statements, he apparently suffocated during a meeting with his friend and Georgian deputy governor, Zurab Usupov, from a gas leak in a space heater. Mr. Usupov also died.

We send our condolences to his wife, three children and the people of Georgia. Prime Minister Zhvania led a crusade for freedom and democracy in Georgia that brought about the Rose Revolution.

As Prime Minister, he led the fight to root out corruption and set Georgia on a new path where democratic institutions could flourish. At the time of his death, he was advocating a peaceful resolution to the problems in South Ossetia.

We mourn his death. People throughout the world, who believe in freedom,

democracy, human rights, and the viability of peaceful political opposition in a political struggle, mourn him as well. He will be missed.

TRIBUTE TO VERNON COOPER, JR.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a world traveler who always comes home to his beloved Hazard, KY, Vernon Cooper, Jr.

Mr. Cooper has fought in Asia in World War II, skinned seals with Eskimos in the Arctic, and climbed mountains in the Andes. But after all those vast experiences, his Perry County home in eastern Kentucky holds a prime place in his heart, and he expresses this through great generosity.

Mr. Cooper, 81 and the former president of Hazard's People's Bank and Trust Co., is happy to give back to his community. A year ago, he learned that the sheriff of Perry County planned to lay off all of his deputies at Christmastime because of a strained budget. Mr. Cooper donated \$20,000 to the county to keep the deputies in uniform over the holidays.

A 1941 graduate of Hazard High School, Mr. Cooper donated \$120,000 to install lights on the school's baseball fields. Parents are thrilled they can now watch their children's night games. And if they ever want to thank their patron, they don't have far to look—Mr. Cooper still attends games, wearing his Hazard High School jersey with the name "Bruiser"—his World War II nickname across the back.

Mr. Cooper has also filled in as a guest host at WLJC, a Beattyville, KY, Christian radio station. When he learned of their hopes to reach a larger audience, he donated \$50,000 for a new transmitter. Now three times as many homes as before receive WLJC's signal.

Perhaps Mr. Cooper's largest gift of all was the gift of life. He donated over \$200,000 to the Appalachian Regional Healthcare Regional Medical Center in Hazard to build an open-heart surgery unit.

Before Mr. Cooper's gift, Hazard-area residents had to travel over 60 miles for an open-heart procedure. The new unit admitted its first patient this month, and its director hopes to perform around 100 open-heart surgeries this year.

Kentucky's greatest resource has always been its compassionate, friendly people. To any who doubt this, I direct them to look at Vernon Cooper, Jr., as a model for all of us to follow. I ask the Senate to join me in recognizing a man who generously wants to give as much back to Kentucky as it has given to him.

Mr. President, recently the Courier-Journal published a story about Mr. Cooper, "Hazard Man, 81, shares his millions with others." I ask unanimous consent that the full article be included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Courier-Journal, Jan. 22, 2005]
HAZARD MAN, 81, SHARES HIS MILLIONS WITH OTHERS; DEPUTIES, SCHOOLS, HOSPITAL GET GIFTS

(By Alan Maimon)

HAZARD, KY—When Vernon Cooper Jr. takes interest in a cause, he lets his check-book do the talking.

Because of Cooper's largess, eight Perry County sheriff's deputies kept their jobs during Christmas 2003, a Beattyville television station tripled its potential viewership, and school baseball and softball teams in Hazard now play under the lights.

His latest gift—of more than \$200,000—helped build an open-heart surgery unit at a Hazard hospital.

Cooper, who is 81 and former president of People's Bank and Trust Co. in Hazard, said he is a multimillionaire who has made a hobby out of giving back to his community. "I've been around the world, but this is the most special place in the world to me," Cooper said at his mountaintop home.

"Hazard is my home, and where's there a need I like to help."

Just over a year ago, Perry County Sheriff Pat Wooton was facing a blue Christmas as he prepared to lay off all his deputies because of a tight budget.

Cooper heard about the situation and pledged \$20,000 to Perry Fiscal Court to keep the officers on the job until officials could allocate more money to the department.

"He's a very civic-minded individual and has been for a long time," Wooton said. "He has made significant contributions to so many areas in Perry County."

Cooper said he has given hundreds of such gifts over the years.

BRUISER'S GIFT

A deep-rooted sense of school spirit led him to make the largest contribution in the 92-year history of the Hazard Independent School District.

Cooper, a 1941 graduate of Hazard High School and a former school board member, wrote a \$120,000 check in 2003 for the installation of lights at the high school's baseball and softball fields.

District Superintendent James Francis said the lights have helped Hazard attract regional tournaments and allowed working parents to see more of their children's games.

"No one has been more instrumental in the progress the school district has made," Francis said.

Cooper still prowls the sidelines of Hazard football games wearing a jersey with "Bruiser"—his World War II nickname—across the back.

UK DONATION

In 1999, Cooper's generosity had unintended consequences when he mailed a \$500 check to the University of Kentucky to help pay for a summer football camp.

An internal investigation of the football program showed the check was endorsed by former UK football recruiting coordinator Claude Bassett and sent to a high school football coach in Memphis, Tenn.

University officials said any gifts to UK should pass through its Office of Development and be deposited in university accounts. Cooper was not accused of any wrongdoing.

Bassett was fired, but Cooper did not let the incident dampen his generous spirit.

"I learned a lesson that not everybody can be trusted, but most people can," he said.

The incident also reaffirmed for Cooper the importance of getting receipts for his donations.

"That's all I ask for in return," he said. "I need a receipt, so I won't have problems with the government."

Cooper, a 1949 UK graduate, said he now opts to build strong relationships with organizations before parting with his money.

Cooper recently gave \$50,000 to WLJC, a television and radio station in Beattyville whose call letters stand for Wonderful Lord Jesus Christ.

Jonathan Drake, manager of WLJC, said the money helped buy a transmitter that nearly tripled the number of homes the station reaches.

"He is a man with a very large heart," Drake said. "He got to know us, was a guest host for us and then really helped out."

HOSPITAL GIFT

One of Cooper's largest gifts to date arrived in several installments to the Appalachian Regional Healthcare Regional Medical Center in Hazard.

Charles Housley, the hospital chain's executive director of development, said the gift went toward building an open-heart surgery unit in an area that has lacked such a facility. Cooper said the amount was \$200,000, but Housley said it was more, declining to be specific.

Ashland, Pikeville, and London—each more than 60 miles from Hazard—had been the only Eastern Kentucky towns to offer the open-heart procedure.

"We hope to give him some recognition for that," Housley said.

The Hazard hospital admitted its first open-heart patient earlier this month and expects to perform around 100 surgeries this year, Housley said.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Cooper said his fondness for philanthropy stems from a love of the mountains of Eastern Kentucky, something he first recognized during a four-day train trip to a California naval base in 1943.

When the then 22-year-old sailor returned from World War II service in Asia, he dreamed of seeing the world but vowed always to return to the Appalachian communities he held dear.

A blind date in 1945 led to marriage. Cooper said he and his wife separated about 25 years ago but remain married. His wife could not be reached for comment.

In his home, Cooper has pictures of himself climbing some of the world's largest mountains. He said he has skinned seals with Eskimos, and he has a jacket identifying him as an honorary colonel in the Argentine army.

But during his travels from the Arctic to the Andes and the Alps, he said he has always had Kentucky on his mind.

Standing beneath the observatory above his home on a recent afternoon, Cooper contemplated his next act of good will.

"I have some things in mind," he said. "There are a lot of worthwhile places out there."

WORDS OF WISDOM

Mr. REID. Our friend and colleague, Senator Ernest Hollings of South Carolina, left us last year to enjoy a well-earned retirement. However, he still has a few words of wisdom, and just a little vitriol, that he would like to share.

Senator Hollings was one of the most fascinating speakers ever to take the Senate floor. His comments were sometimes controversial, but always thought-provoking and delivered in a way only Fritz Hollings could orate. We miss him.