

wonderful parents, Phil and Cecile Pomerleau, at his ordination in Rome—a very proud time for his parents, certainly a proud time for Claude, but also a very proud time for Marcelle and me.

He has been, in many ways, our spiritual light and friend all these years. He is very much a brother to me, as he is to Marcelle. I have had the privilege one other time to have him as visiting Chaplain. And in my 31 years in the Senate, those two times stand out as highlights in my career.

So again I thank the distinguished Senator from Alaska for showing his usual courtesy, and, of course, I cherish our friendship of over three decades.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

IRAQ

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise this morning to reflect for a moment on the apparent successful events in Iraq this weekend and also to look forward to more successful events in the months ahead. It appears the people of Iraq—10 million of them—turned out on Saturday to ratify a constitution under which elections will take place on December 15 of this year. I believe now is an appropriate time for us to recognize, in the process of liberating the people of Iraq, the great accomplishments our brave young men and women have made to allow that process to take place.

About 2½ years ago, America went into Iraq with three stated goals. One was to depose Saddam Hussein. That was done. He goes on trial tomorrow, to be tried by his own people, in his own court, by his own judges. Second, we went in to rid the nation of weapons that could hurt others and stabilize the country so we could accomplish the third goal, which is to allow the people of Iraq to self-determine their future, as we in America did some 229 years ago.

The first goal, deposing Hussein, was accomplished, and he goes on trial. The second goal of stabilizing the country has, in fact, been accomplished. It has been accomplished in a unique way and was ratified by the very election that took place on Saturday, because on Saturday the Iraqi military protected the Iraqi polling places to allow the Iraqis to have an election that had very little disruption or violence by the insurgents. Now we move toward December 15 and the election of a permanent assembly for the people of Iraq to govern themselves.

On the first day of February of this year, I visited Baghdad, shortly after the elections that were held on January 31. I saw on that day the pride of Iraqis holding up their index finger, stained with blue ink, with smiles on their faces and self-satisfaction from having voted, which they did. We saw

at that election where a number of the Sunnis stayed home, where most of the Shiites and the Kurds voted, and there were about 8 million votes.

Just 8 months later, I watched this morning on TV and saw index fingers raised with ink stains to evidence the vote that had taken place, but those ink stains were not just on the fingers of Shiites and Kurds, they were on the fingers of Sunnis as well because, as was said after the first election in Iraq in January, the Sunnis learned that in a democracy, if you do not vote, you do not count. Although their votes may have been different yesterday, it laid the groundwork for this country to self-determine its future in peace, for its three groups within their country to join together, to form a government, to iron out their differences peacefully, and to grow in the Middle East what many thought was never possible, and that is an Arab nation self-determining its future, with its people electing its representatives, living and growing in peace and harmony with its neighbors.

There have been a lot of critics of our efforts in Iraq. There have been some who have said the war was wrong and others who have said we ought to come home, when, in fact, they have misjudged and mischaracterized the entire event. For us to come home is to lose the war. For us to stay is for liberty and peace and freedom to take root, to grow, and to prosper, and for an area of the world that for all time has been in turmoil to have the chance in future time to be in peace. That is not just good for the Middle East. That is not just good for the Iraqis. That is good for America. That is good for the nations of the world. That is good for the future peace of this great Nation we call the United States of America, for it was terrorism that drug us into the Middle East. It is terrorism, through insurgents, that we fight today in Iraq. And it is terrorism that will lose, not in the end to bullets but to votes, with a people free to self-determine their future.

The people in Iraq began that process on January 31 and reaffirmed that process this past Saturday. I am confident and looking forward to the future, that on December 15 they will reaffirm that process again by holding free elections, guarded—and peacefully guarded—by their own trained troops, who will be the security force that in the future replaces our men and women, and that they will secure the country of Iraq not just for one election, not just for one day, but for the future.

It has been said that victory in Iraq is a process and not an event. I believe that is an appropriate statement. We have gone through a process that deposed an evil dictator, stabilized a violent nation, allowed free elections to take place, for a constitution to be drawn, for elections for its ratification to take place, and now we are on the doorstep of the election of those permanent representatives who will self-

determine the future of the nation of Iraq. In this process, known as freedom, America has contributed much.

Our sons and daughters have been there steadfastly fighting the insurgents, securing the Iraqi people, and giving the flame of liberty and freedom a chance to grow and glow. On Saturday that process apparently took place again. I look forward to it taking place on December 15. I thank God for the brave men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces and the resilience of our people as, once again, we are the leading light for freedom, peace, hope, and liberty not just in our own country but around the world.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VITTER). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to use my leader time and not interfere with morning business.

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

LEADERSHIP PAC RIDER

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this morning I would like to speak for a short time about a provision of the bill before the Senate, the Transportation bill, that was removed by Republican leaders when the bill was taken up yesterday. I commend my colleagues, Senators FEINGOLD and MCCAIN, for their leadership in advocating to the Republican leaders to take this step. The provision should not pass quietly in the night. It was in this bill. It should not have been. More importantly, it should not emerge in any way in the future in some type of a must-pass conference report.

The leadership PAC rider would have created a giant loophole in our campaign finance laws and would have permitted unseemly money transfers among incumbents and national parties.

Today, leadership PACs are bound by the same campaign finance rules as are regular campaign PACs, known as political action committees; that is, leadership PACs can't give more than \$15,000 annually to the national parties. The rider inserted in this bill during markup by the Republican leadership removed this limit on leadership PACs so they could transfer unlimited funds to national parties.

My colleagues, Senators FEINGOLD and MCCAIN, rightly decried this move as a major circumvention of our campaign finance laws. The provision would have directly undermined the point of those laws: preventing corruption in fact and in appearance. I joined with them to oppose this provision and