

important resources to be needlessly delayed.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Grassley-Baucus substitute amendment at the desk be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 4695) was agreed to, as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. PAYMENTS FOR TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE TO UNITED STATES CITIZENS RETURNED FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

(a) INCREASE IN AGGREGATE PAYMENTS LIMIT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006.—Section 1113(d) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1313(d)) is amended by inserting “, except that, in the case of fiscal year 2006, the total amount of such assistance provided during that fiscal year shall not exceed \$6,000,000” after “2003”.

SEC. 2. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION IN THE DIRECTORY OF NEW HIRES TO ASSIST ADMINISTRATION OF FOOD STAMP PROGRAMS.

Section 453(j) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 653(j)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating the second paragraph (7) as paragraph (9); and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph

“(10) INFORMATION COMPARISONS AND DISCLOSURE TO ASSIST IN ADMINISTRATION OF FOOD STAMP PROGRAMS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—If, for purposes of administering a food stamp program under the Food Stamp Act of 1977, a State agency responsible for the administration of the program transmits to the Secretary the names and social security account numbers of individuals, the Secretary shall disclose to the State agency information on the individuals and their employers maintained in the National Directory of New Hires, subject to this paragraph.

“(B) CONDITION ON DISCLOSURE BY THE SECRETARY.—The Secretary shall make a disclosure under subparagraph (A) only to the extent that the Secretary determines that the disclosure would not interfere with the effective operation of the program under this part.

“(C) USE AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION BY STATE AGENCIES.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—A State agency may not use or disclose information provided under this paragraph except for purposes of administering a program referred to in subparagraph (A).

“(ii) INFORMATION SECURITY.—The State agency shall have in effect data security and control policies that the Secretary finds adequate to ensure the security of information obtained under this paragraph and to ensure that access to such information is restricted to authorized persons for purposes of authorized uses and disclosures.

“(iii) PENALTY FOR MISUSE OF INFORMATION.—An officer or employee of the State agency who fails to comply with this subparagraph shall be subject to the sanctions under subsection (1)(2) to the same extent as if the officer or employee were an officer or employee of the United States.

“(D) PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS.—State agencies requesting information under this paragraph shall adhere to uniform procedures established by the Secretary governing information requests and data matching under this paragraph.

“(E) REIMBURSEMENT OF COSTS.—The State agency shall reimburse the Secretary, in accordance with subsection (k)(3), for the costs incurred by the Secretary in furnishing the information requested under this paragraph.”.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill (H.R. 5865), as amended, was read the third time, and passed.

JOINT MEETING OF THE TWO HOUSES—ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will stand in recess until 12 noon for a joint meeting with the Prime Minister of Iraq.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 10:40 a.m., recessed until 12 noon, and the Senate, preceded by the Secretary of the Senate, Emily Reynolds; the Deputy Sergeant at Arms, Lynne Halbrooks; the Vice President of the United States; and the President pro tempore, Mr. STEVENS, proceeded to the Hall of the House of Representatives to hear the address by Prime Minister Maliki of the Republic of Iraq.

(The address delivered by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq to the joint meeting of the two Houses of Congress is printed in the Proceedings of the House of Representatives in today's RECORD.)

At 12:02 p.m., the Senate having returned to its Chamber, reassembled and was called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

BURMESE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.J. Res. 86, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 86) approving the renewal of import restrictions contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 30 minutes of debate equally divided.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the debate from 12:30 to 6:30 this evening on energy security be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees with respect to the motion to proceed to S. 3711; provided further that following any opening remarks of the two leaders on Thursday, July 27, the motion to proceed be agreed to, and the Senate then begin the consideration of S. 3711.

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

ADDRESS OF IRAQI PRIME MINISTER NOURI AL-MALIKI

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, before speaking on the Burmese Free-

dom and Democracy Act, I want to make a few comments about the speech of the Prime Minister of Iraq which we just had an opportunity a few moments ago to hear in the joint session over in the House Chamber.

Today we mark a step forward in the war on terror. A mere 3½ years ago, the dictator, Saddam Hussein, would have addressed his regime's legislature of lackeys. Today, the democratically elected Prime Minister of Iraq addressed a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress.

A mere 3½ years ago, the dictator, Saddam Hussein, ruled Iraq. He terrorized his own countrymen with murder, torture, and weapons of mass death. He posed a security threat to the entire region and to the United States. The international community decided he had to face serious consequences.

In March of 2003, America, as we all well know, led a multinational coalition of forces to depose the dictator and to liberate Iraq. Since then, the country has made remarkable progress as it throws off the shackles of tyranny and embraces democracy.

Iraqis have held three successful national elections, ratified a constitution, elected a permanent unity government, and formed a cabinet with a strong prime minister at its head: Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, whom we had the pleasure of hearing from just an hour or so ago.

It took our country 13 years to go from independence to the implementation of our Constitution. Iraqis have done it in 3—and under the glare of the 24-hour news cycle coverage and the threat of terrorist attacks.

When Prime Minister Maliki ascended to the podium today, it was hard to deny the importance of the moment. His presence in this Capitol represents a victory for democracy. And his country is, and will continue to be, an important ally in the war on terror. Of course, there will be many tough days ahead in Iraq. There is no denying that the security situation represents a real challenge. But America does not avoid challenges, and we do not abandon our allies when the going gets tough.

We are moving forward in Iraq. The country recently realized its highest oil production and export levels since before its liberation, and during the past 3 years, per capita income in Iraq has doubled.

I would also like to call to my colleagues' attention an article titled “Iraq as a Sovereign Nation” written by the Prime Minister that appeared in Monday's Wall Street Journal. It points to very tangible proof that Iraq is moving forward.

The Iraqi province of al-Muthanna, located at the southernmost border of that country, has become the first province in which local Iraqi forces have taken full responsibility for law enforcement and security, taking over for our coalition forces. President Bush has frequently said: As Iraqis stand up,

we will stand down. That is exactly what has happened in al-Muthanna, home to over a half million Iraqis.

Local Iraqi police and military have stood up and taken the place of 1,400 coalition troops. The Governor of al-Muthanna has command of the provincial police. Iraqi national police and Iraqi Army troops will operate in the province under the control of the Prime Minister and the National Government.

The transfer of power in al-Muthanna is only the first step. The Prime Minister writes that "current estimates envision half of Iraqi's provinces transferring security responsibility before the end of 2006"—this year. He and I agree that this process should not be driven by an arbitrary timeline but by the situation on the ground; nevertheless, this is an encouraging sign.

He goes on to write that the decisions for future transfers of power will be made based on the threat assessment in the province, the readiness of the local Iraqi forces, the readiness of the local governmental authorities, and overall coalition force posture.

The historic achievement of local control in al-Muthanna represents an important step forward in our mission in Iraq. As Iraqis stand up, we will stand down, and we will leave behind a proud and free Iraq.

The Prime Minister ends his article by saying:

With God's help, and continued assistance from the coalition, our regional neighbors and the larger international community, our people will unite and prosper. Together, we can and will succeed.

I think we should all commend the Prime Minister for his vision and leadership. America will and must continue to stand by Iraq. None of what has been achieved in the last 3 years there has been at all easy, but we have succeeded and we will continue to succeed because freedom and democracy are stronger than the terrorists' tools of mayhem and fear.

Great credit must go to President Bush for his strong leadership in the war on terror which has enabled us to reach this transfer of power in al-Muthanna, and soon, in other provinces as well. I also commend the Iraqi Government, Iraqi police, and Iraqi security forces for their hard work in promoting stability in the country.

Of course, Madam President, I know our colleagues join me in thanking the men and women of America's Armed Forces for their courage, dedication, and sacrifice.

Stability in Iraq means stability in the region and greater security at home. As the Prime Minister said in his speech just delivered, according to translation:

Do not imagine that this problem [of terrorism] is solely an Iraqi problem, because the terrorist front represents a threat to all free countries and free peoples of the world. . . . The responsibility of facing this challenge lies on the shoulders of every country and every people that respects and cherishes freedom.

The Prime Minister is exactly right. For that reason, America must stand firm in the war on terror, and we must stand side by side with our Iraqi allies in their war on the terrorists.

Before I finish, let me say a few words about the current situation in the Middle East regarding Israel and Hezbollah. Israel is America's long-standing friend and an ally in the war on terror. In fact, the horrors of September 11 awoke many in this country to what Israelis face daily and have faced daily for literally years. That country has been and continues to be on the front lines of the war on terror. I, for one, support Israel's efforts during this intense time to do whatever it takes to defend her people and her borders.

Maybe some have forgotten, but the terrorist group, Hezbollah, killed 241 American service men and women in Beirut in 1983. Hezbollah's love of death and destruction is on a par with al-Qaida. They are enemies to every peace-loving, democratic country. They are a threat, and Israel has a right to pursue them wherever they exist.

Now, Madam President, if I may, I would like to turn to speak in support of the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act, which is the bill before us this afternoon.

This May, along with a number of co-sponsors, including my good friends, Senator FEINSTEIN and Senator MCCAIN, I introduced this bill for Senate consideration. Passage of this bill would mean continued sanctions against the illegitimate, dictatorial regime that currently holds Burma literally in its grip—the Orwellian-named State Peace and Development Council, or SPDC. This Senate will be acting on behalf of those in Burma who are being repressed. The Burmese people want these sanctions because they want democracy, justice, and freedom, and we stand with them.

I see my friend, Senator MCCAIN, here to speak on this issue as well. He has actually had the privilege of meeting with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the hero of Burmese independence, an opportunity that has been denied to most because she has been essentially under house arrest for 10 of the last 17 years.

The broad, bipartisan coalition in this Chamber for this legislation indicates America's firm resolve to oppose the tyrannical SPDC regime, and America's recognition that Burma, under the SPDC, poses an immediate threat to its region. To put it simply, the allies of the Burmese people have a moral obligation to continue to stand up against the SPDC. I take great pride that we are continuing to do so.

As many of my colleagues are well aware, last year, the extension of sanctions was signed into law by President Bush on July 27, 2005. It enjoyed strong, bipartisan support and passed this body by a vote of 97 to 1. Unfortunately, recent events have reminded us of the need to keep up the pressure on the villainous SPDC regime.

Ibrahim Gambari, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, visited Burma in May as a representative of Secretary-General Kofi Annan. He met with the ringleaders with the SPDC as well as Nobel Peace Prize winner, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who, as I indicated earlier, is a political prisoner and has been the leader of that country's democracy movement for quite some time. Suu Kyi, as I indicated earlier, has spent 10 of the last 17 years in detention or under house arrest for her efforts to bring freedom and democracy to her people. Many other members of her party, the National League for Democracy—the NLD—have been detained as well.

After returning, U.N. Diplomat Gambari wrote a column for the International Herald-Tribune titled "A Crack in the Burmese Door." After acknowledging the SPDC's years of repression and misrule, Gambari wrote:

Last month, something seemed to change. Burma's locked door popped open a small crack.

Gambari wrote this based on his discussions with the SPDC. But I think we should judge actions rather than words, and those actions tell an entirely different story. In fact, nothing fundamentally has changed in Burma. Suu Kyi remains under house arrest and the regime continues to engage in outrageous behavior.

I do not share Mr. Gambari's optimistic view that the SPDC is ready to, as he puts it, "turn a new page." In my view, the junta is only interested in deflecting growing pressure from the international community to change its repressive ways—and in avoiding the U.N. Security Council's consideration of a nonpunitive resolution that addresses the threat the SPDC poses to its own people and the entire region.

Shortly after Mr. Gambari's visit, Suu Kyi's house arrest was extended for another year—double the length of the extensions she typically receives, under the regime's perverted concept of a legal process.

Even worse, Suu Kyi's life was threatened in a state-run newspaper. The New Light of Myanmar, a mouthpiece for the SPDC junta, printed the following in a story on July 6:

The days of Daw Suu Kyi and NLD are numbered. They are heading for the tragic end . . . Daw Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy (NLD) pose the most dangerous threat to the nation.

That is an ominous threat. And the people who make it have the power to see it carried out.

They have made an attempt on her life before, and are apparently threatening to do so again.

In addition to the immediate danger its misrule poses to the Burmese people, we cannot forget for a single moment that the military regime in Rangoon poses a significant and non-traditional threat to the entire region. Their litany of abuses is well known.

Refugees spill into Thailand, fleeing the SPDC's brutal war against ethnic minorities.

Illegal drugs pour across Burma's borders into China, India, and Thailand, and destroy the lives of the region's youth.

And an unchecked HIV/AIDS virus closely follows drug trafficking routes, leaving disease and human tragedy in its wake.

It is worth noting that the SPDC spent \$70,000 in 2004 to combat HIV/AIDS. This is in stark contrast to the millions of dollars spent on weapons from China and Russia—and, according to recent news reports, North Korea.

This is no time for the international community and multilateral organizations, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN, to soften its stance on Burma.

I want to emphasize for my colleagues one very important point. This Senate has already done much on behalf of the Burmese people. Now it is time for the U.N. to do its part.

We need less talk and more action at the U.N. in support of democracy, freedom, and justice in Burma. We must keep in mind that the situation is so dire in Burma that the U.N. has already adopted 28 nonbinding resolutions regarding that country. It is now time for the U.N. Security Council to act.

The criteria and justification for bringing a country before the Security Council was outlined in a report commissioned by former Czech President Vaclav Havel and South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu. There is no one in this Chamber who does not applaud their sustained efforts to bring about a peaceful solution to the Burma problem.

In fact, the Senate passed in May a measure that I sponsored calling on the U.N. Security Council to discuss a binding, nonpunitive resolution on Burma that calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners in that country; an end to abuses against minorities, including the use of rape as a weapon of war; and the beginning of a meaningful national reconciliation process that includes the unfettered participation of the NLD and ethnic minorities with the SPDC.

It is time for the U.N. Security Council to take such action. It is time for free nations to stand for freedom.

I specifically call on the respective governments of Ghana and the Republic of Congo, current nonpermanent members of the Security Council, to support this resolution.

Ghana, in particular, is a country that values freedom and the rule of law, and support for the resolution would unequivocally demonstrate that they stand on the side of justice in Burma.

I urge our Representative to the United Nations to continue efforts to move toward Security Council consideration of a nonpunitive resolution on Burma. To do any less would be to take a step backward.

Mr. President, the Congress has stood with the people of Burma in their quest

for freedom and democracy. It is time for the U.N. Security Council to do the same.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I thank Senator MCCONNELL and Senator FEINSTEIN for their leadership once again in renewing the sanctions contained in the 2003 Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act. I am proud to cosponsor and support this resolution.

I again thank the Senator from Kentucky and the Senator from California for their leadership and their advocacy. I thank Senator MCCONNELL for his very strong and inspirational remarks that he completed.

As we renew these sanctions, the situation inside Burma continues to worsen still. The military junta in that country controls the population through a campaign of violence and terror, and the lack of freedom and justice there is simply appalling. The Burmese regime has murdered political opponents, used child soldiers and forced labor, and employed rape as a weapon of war. Political activists remain imprisoned, including elected members of parliament. And that courageous woman, Aung San Suu Kyi, has spent yet another year in captivity.

Aung San Suu Kyi's resolve in the face of tyranny inspires me and, I believe, every individual who holds democracy dear. Because she stands for freedom, this heroic woman has endured attacks, arrest, captivity, and untold suffering at the hands of the regime. Burma's rulers fear Aung San Suu Kyi because of what she represents—peace, freedom and justice for all Burmese people. The thugs who run the country have tried to stifle her voice, but they will never extinguish her moral courage. Her leadership and example shine brightly for the millions of Burmese who hunger for freedom and for those of us outside Burma who seek justice for its people. The work of Aung San Suu Kyi and the members of the National League for Democracy must be the world's work. We must continue to press the junta until it is willing to negotiate an irreversible transition to democratic rule. The Burmese people deserve no less.

And, while we see encouraging signs that the world is no longer content to sit on the sidelines, not everyone has gotten the message. Nine years after Burma joined ASEAN, the Southeast Asian nations remain too passive in the face of Burma's outrages. The European Union has recently announced that it will waive a travel ban on Burma's top leaders so that the Burmese foreign minister can attend the Asia-Europe meeting in Finland this September. It is hard to see what new actions the Burmese junta must commit in order to induce the world to treat the junta like the pariah it wishes to be.

At least there should be no mistaking where the United States stands

when it comes to repression in Burma. The U.S. Congress has been in the forefront of efforts to isolate that country, and we stepped up these measures significantly in 2003 with the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act. In doing so, we took active steps to pressure the military junta, and we sent a signal to the Burmese people that they are not forgotten—that the American people care about their freedom and will stand up for justice in their country. Today's renewal of the import restrictions—sanctions that are supplied by supported by the National League for Democracy—is just one of those steps. I believe that these restrictions must remain in place until Burma embarks on a true path of reconciliation—a process that must include the NLD and Burmese ethnic minorities.

But the import ban must not be the only step. The U.S. has pushed for a resolution at the United Nations Security Council, and this step should garner wide support. The Europeans and ASEAN too should take up the Burma issue and put it on their front burners. Every responsible member of the international community must realize that the desire of people to be free is universal, and it does not stop at the gates of Rangoon. The people of Burma desire freedom and democracy, they have expressed this desire, and they shall one day have it. The question is not "if" but "when." We shall help them get there, and we shall never forget their brave struggle.

Again, I thank the Senator from Kentucky and the Senator from California for their leadership on this very important issue.

There are many issues that are before America's attention today and that dominate our television and our newspapers. But this struggle for freedom on the part of the Burmese people has been there before and, unfortunately, will be after. We must be steadfast in our advocacy until they attain the freedom that they deserve under the leadership of this magnificent, Nobel Prize-winning hero for men and women throughout the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. MCCONNELL. If I can say to my friend from Arizona before he leaves the floor, it is hard to imagine that the world simply doesn't pay any attention to this outrageous regime. I ask my friend, if they had a weapon of mass destruction, probably we would be paying a little more attention to this pariah regime—does my friend from Arizona not agree?

Mr. MCCAIN. I agree with my friend from Kentucky. Let me respond by referencing, again, this struggle carried out by this magnificent woman. She has endured 17 years of house arrest. When her husband was in England, he was dying of cancer. She has two sons, by the way. He was dying of cancer, and she wanted, of course, to go to be with her husband in his last hours. The

junta said: Yes, you can go, but you can never come back.

Among the incredible sacrifices she has made, she was not even allowed to be with her husband as he died.

One time she was surrounded by these thugs who killed some of her supporters. She was in a car for a week—inside of her car for a week, surrounded by these unspeakable, brutal thugs who were the goons of this regime.

The things she has undergone. Yet, incredibly, whenever she is with these thugs from this junta, she treats them with the utmost courtesy. She serves them tea. She treats them as only a woman of her caliber can treat her mortal enemies.

Her story needs to be told and retold throughout the world, thousands and thousands of times. As a person who is a hero worshiper, an admirer, I believe that heroes have an important place in our Nation and the world. When I see her, she ranks in the first ranks of heroes in the world. It seems to me, with all due respect to the other nations of the world—our European friends, our ASEAN friends, and others—that we should be far more energetic in her advocacy and advocacy of freedom for her people.

I thank the Senator from Kentucky. Mr. McCONNELL. I thank the Senator as well. He makes a very important point.

The United Nations has not responded to efforts to prod them into moving this item up on the agenda. It could well be because of the lack of enthusiasm, shall I say, of the Chinese and the Russians—two permanent members of the Security Council. Nevertheless, the efforts persist. This U.S. sanctions bill is important, but it is not going to get the job done. We know that. It would require multilateral sanctions of a dramatic basis, such as were imposed against South Africa, to get the job done. At least at this point, the ASEAN countries seem to be more interested in doing business there than they are squeezing the regime.

There was, however, one encouraging sign. Burma was scheduled to host the ASEAN meeting this year. That did, I think, embarrass the members to the extent that they were unwilling to do that. So ASEAN obviously is not meeting in Burma in 2006.

The struggle continues. I thank our colleagues. This is going to pass on a voice vote shortly. I thank our colleagues for their awareness of this issue. I think it is one that will be before us for some time to come.

I don't know if there are other speakers. I see the Democratic leader. Does he wish to speak on this bill?

I yield the floor.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, 3 years ago, Burma's military junta arrested democracy advocate Aung San Suu Kyi and returned her to the house arrest that she has endured with only intermittent periods of release since 1989.

Three years ago, Congress enacted the Burmese Freedom and Democracy

Act of 2003, and we have renewed the sanctions called for under that legislation every year since then.

That legislation is set to expire this summer, and we are now considering whether to extend its provisions for another 3 years.

Tragically, Burma's human rights record has worsened, rather than improved, in the 3 years since Congress enacted the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act.

Earlier this year, the detention of Aung San Suu Kyi was extended for another year. More than 1,100 political prisoners languish in jail in Burma, prevented from expressing their aspirations for a democratic government.

The military junta ruling Burma still refuses to enter into a dialog with the opposition National League for Democracy. Its brutal treatment of ethnic minorities and advocates of democracy remains unabated. Forced labor is a widespread problem, and labor activists are regularly imprisoned for trying to combat it.

The failure of Burma's dictators to address the HIV/AIDS and avian influenza situation in the country contributes to the horrific situation of the Burmese people.

And the regime's effects are not confined to Burma's borders. Thousands of refugees have fled to Thailand, Malaysia, India, and Bangladesh. Burma is the world's second largest opium producer, supplying 90 percent of the heroin from Southeast Asia. It is also the single largest producer of methamphetamine in the region.

One year ago, nearly to the day, I stood on the Senate floor and questioned whether these economic sanctions were the most appropriate tool for bringing about the kind of change we need to see in Burma.

The arguments against economic sanctions continue to be quite compelling. First of all, they have a very poor record of success. The kinds of governments that merit this sort of treatment are not sensitive to international opprobrium, nor are they swayed by it to make changes. Second, economic sanctions tend to hurt the people that they are intended to help. Ordinary people lose their jobs, while the military and its leaders are left untouched. Third, severing economic ties shuts off an important avenue of dialog that can promote change.

Those who support the sanctions point out, rightly, that Burma's rulers are not willing to engage in dialog, either at home or with its neighbors. It is plain that Burma's military dictators are not interested in being members of the international community. They have rebuffed the United Nations. And they have refused to allow U.N. Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Paulo Sergio Pinheiro to visit Burma since November 2003.

They are equally uninterested in improving the lives of their people, or participating in the global economy. While more and more nations have

turned to freer markets to bolster their growth, Burma has actually worked to dismantle fundamental economic institutions like property rights, contract enforcement, sustainable fiscal policies, and a reliable currency.

It is difficult to imagine an environment less conducive to growth and less attractive to foreign investment. Revenues from oil and gas exports flow to the regime. Businesses and farmers are routinely shaken down. And productive assets are concentrated in the hands of the regime's cronies.

In December of last year, America led the effort that produced the U.N. Security Council's first-ever discussion of the human rights abuses in Burma. I welcome the administration's efforts to increase international pressure on the military dictatorship.

But if we are serious about trying to isolate the junta through sanctions, we cannot act alone. The European Union has also imposed sanctions on Burma, but neighboring countries continue to trade with Burma and to direct investment there.

The administration needs to work with other countries, especially the countries in the region Thailand, China, India—that are still economically engaged with the dictatorship to intensify the pressure on the regime.

The countries in the region have the most to lose from the worsening of the situation in Burma. As the oppression and abuse continue, more refugees will flee across the borders. As the junta focuses on enriching itself and ignoring the needs of its people, more drugs will flow across the border, and the risk of diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria, antibiotic-resistant tuberculosis, and avian influenzas will increase in the region.

Despite my reservations about the effectiveness of sanctions to effect change, I will support this resolution, extending the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act for a further 3 years.

This extension adds our voice to the voice of the Burmese people, muffled by the oppressive regime, in calling out for democracy and human rights. It is my hope that our action today will increase the awareness of the worsening human rights situation and bolster international support for democracy in Burma.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I rise in support of H.J. Res. 86, which will renew the import ban we first imposed on Burma in 2003.

The Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act was our response to the reprehensible attack on the National League for Democracy which occurred on May 30, 2003, and the arrest of many NLD officials, including their leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

I worked with my colleagues, Senator McCONNELL and Senator BAUCUS, to develop and pass that legislation. We authorized a ban on imports from Burma for 3 years, subject to annual renewal by Congress.

Well, the 3 years are about to end, and unfortunately the situation in

Burma has not improved. The latest report from the State Department notes the continuation of killings and rape, use of forced labor, forced conscription, arrests and disappearances of political activists, and other abuses by the ruling military junta. And on May 23, 2006, the ruling junta extended for another year the unjustified house arrest of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. To renew trade with Burma now would send exactly the wrong signal. We need to renew the import ban as a visible demonstration to the ruling junta that their actions are unacceptable and that they must change their ways.

We also need to encourage other nations to take strong action. The European Union has imposed some sanctions. Canada, Australia, Japan, and Norway also have some restrictions in place. I think they should each join us in doing more. Other nations should be acting as well, in particular, China. I urge the administration to continue engaging our trading partners to join us in strengthening sanctions against the ruling military junta. We need to work together in order to spur meaningful democratic reform in Burma.

For these reasons, I support authorizing the import ban for another 3 years, and I support the outright renewal of the import ban for another year. I, therefore, urge my colleagues to join me in supporting passage of H.J. Res. 86 and getting it to the President's desk for his signature as soon as possible.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I rise today in support of legislation to renew the ban on all imports from Burma for another year.

The House unanimously passed this bill earlier this month and I urge the Senate to follow suit today.

This bill amends the original Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 to allow the sanctions to be renewed, 1 year at a time, for up to 6 years.

Simply put, the ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council has done nothing over the past 3 years to warrant a lifting of the sanctions.

It has failed miserably to make "substantial and measurable progress" towards recognition of the 1990 elections—decisively won by Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy—and a full restoration of representative government.

If we vote to lift the sanctions prematurely, we will only reward Rangoon for its rejection of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

Let us review the facts.

Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Prize recipient and leader of the National League for Democracy, is confined to her home by orders of the military junta. She recently celebrated her 61st birthday under house arrest and on June 9, 2006, her detention was renewed for another year.

She has spent the better part of the past 16 years imprisoned or under house arrest.

The human rights situation in Burma is deplorable and demands a clear, unified response from the international community: 1,300 political prisoners are still in jail; according to a report by the Asian human rights group, Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, 127 democracy activists have been tortured to death since 1988; 70,000 child soldiers have been forcibly recruited; the practice of rape as a form of repression has been sanctioned by the Burmese military; use of forced labor is widespread; human trafficking is rampant; and the government engages in the production and distribution of opium and methamphetamine.

Given this substantial list of abuses, it is no surprise that a recent report by former Czech President Vaclav Havel and retired archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa—"Threat to Peace: A Call for the UN Security Council to Act on Burma"—confirms the need for United Nations intervention.

It details how the situation in Burma fulfills each of the criteria used for past intervention by the Security Council: overthrow of an elected government; armed conflicts with ethnic minorities; widespread human right violations; outflow of refugees—over 700,000—and drug production and trafficking and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The report should be required reading for all members of the United Nations who doubt whether or not the Security Council should take up Burma immediately.

Some may argue that because the sanctions have not achieved their desired goals—the release of Suu Kyi, the restoration of a free and democratic Burma—they should be terminated.

I could not disagree more. First, Aung San Suu Kyi and the democratic opposition continue to support a ban on all imports from Burma.

Second, the international community is coming together to put pressure on Burma: In July 2005, ASEAN forced Burma to forgo its scheduled rotation as chairman of the organization; on December 16, 2005, the U.N. Security Council debated the situation in Burma for the first time.

Last month, the United Nations Under Secretary for Political Affairs briefed members of the Security Council on his meeting with Suu Kyi, her first meeting with a foreigner since 2004; a group of legislators from member countries strongly urged ASEAN last week to take concrete measures to resolve the political situation in Burma; Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar, whose country currently chairs ASEAN, blasted Burma in an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal this week for undermining the credibility of ASEAN by not moving closer to democracy.

And, finally, I believe we are making progress on having a majority of the United Nations Security Council support adding Burma to the agenda of the Security Council for debate and possible passage of a binding, nonpunitive resolution on Burma.

By taking a leadership role on this issue, the United States has inspired other countries in the United Nations to put pressure on Burma to respect the wishes of its people and the international community to release Suu Kyi and restore a democratic, representative government.

They have begun to recognize that—as the Havel-Tutu report documents—Burma's actions not only represent a threat to the rights and freedoms of the Burmese people, but to the region and international community as a whole.

I strongly urge those members of the Security Council who have not done so to add their names to the growing list of countries who support adding Burma to the council's agenda. Passage of this legislation today will serve as another beacon of hope for the Burmese people and another example of leadership that will bring other countries to their side.

I remind my colleagues that under the provisions of this legislation, we will have the opportunity to debate sanctions on Burma every year. That is how it should be.

Sanctions are not a panacea for every foreign policy dispute. But, when they are backed by a robust international response, they can be effective and they can compel change.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu has rightly said, "As long as [Suu Kyi] remains under house arrest, not one of us is truly free".

Today, I urge the SPDC to release Aung San Suu Kyi, recognize the 1990 elections, and engage in a true dialogue with the National League for Democracy.

I urge the United Nations Security Council to debate and pass a binding, nonpunitive resolution on Burma that recognizes the threat the regime poses to the region and calls for Suu Kyi and all prisoners of conscience to be released.

And, finally, I urge the Senate to renew the sanctions on Burma for another year.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, the Senator from Kentucky has been working on this matter for years. I appreciate his vigilance and diligence. I also say to my friend from Arizona, for the Senator from Arizona to stand and talk about brutality and suppression means a lot. He understands it. We all know he understands it, having been a victim of that for years when he was a prisoner of war. I appreciate the leadership of these two fine Senators moving this matter forward.

I am going to speak on another issue at this time, Madam President. Are there others from either side who are going to speak on this matter?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I say to my friend from Nevada, I am not aware of any other speakers on either side.

Mr. REID. Then we should pass it, and I will get the floor and move on.

Mr. MCCONNELL. How much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 14 minutes.

Mr. McCONNELL. I yield the remainder of the time on this side.

Mr. REID. I yield all of our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back. The question is on third reading and passage of the joint resolution.

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 86) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

GULF OF MEXICO ENERGY SECURITY ACT OF 2006—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, today the Senate is considering a bill that represents a positive step for our Nation's energy security. The Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act can play a role in building a better energy future for our country and especially a better future for the people of the gulf coast.

I want the record to reflect my deep appreciation to Senator BINGAMAN, who is the ranking member of this Energy Committee, for working with us on this issue. Senator BINGAMAN has—at least to my understanding—no problems with where this bill will allow drilling. He has concerns as to how the money is going to be allocated following the drilling. I understand his concern and appreciate it. Senator BINGAMAN is the epitome of a gentleman. Even though he has concerns about how we are moving this bill forward, he has not been an impediment, and we are moving forward as quickly as we can so, again, I want the record to reflect my deep appreciation for Senator BINGAMAN, what a good friend he is and a good Member of the Senate.

I am going to say more about the specifics of this legislation. Prior to doing that, I ask unanimous consent that during the consideration of S. 3711, there be a limitation of five first-degree amendments, energy-related amendments, in order on each side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I say to my good friend, the Democratic leader, as he knows the development of this bill was done on a bipartisan basis. It is narrowly targeted but represents a delicate compromise between the gulf coast Senators, Senators from Florida, and it is the feeling of all those involved in developing this legislation, as I say, again, on a truly bipartisan basis, that if we open this bill up to amendments—we have lots of good ideas on this side of the aisle, and I expect there are lots of good ideas on that side of the aisle. I recall when we were doing the major Energy bill last

year about this time, we spent several weeks on it as we considered virtually everybody's good idea about what to do, either on the conservation side or the production side.

So I say to my good friend, the only way to achieve success, it strikes the sponsors of the bill, is to keep it very narrowly crafted and to pass it as is out of the Senate.

I know that is not what we customarily do, but this is an unusual situation. We are trying to respond to high energy prices in America. Even though natural gas prices have subsided somewhat in recent months, we anticipate them going up again next fall. There is a good chance that the futures market in natural gas will actually respond favorably to this measure, if we can get it out of the Senate. Natural gas prices, we all know, are set in America. It is not a global price setting. It could provide immediate relief to natural gas customers all over America.

For all of those reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I am disappointed that the majority has objected. I think the proposal I made would permit the Senate to make improvements to the bill. We limited the number of amendments and we certainly would be willing to limit the time on them. But I understand the objection of the majority.

This legislation opens approximately the same area President Clinton proposed when he was President. This would be opening an area of oil and gas exploration in the Gulf of Mexico. But when President Bush came into office, he narrowed the consideration at the request of his brother, the Governor of Florida. This bill moves us back closer to President Clinton's proposal with some additional deepwater acreage opened south of the 181 area. It satisfies the concerns of the State of Florida. It is also a positive step for those who want to see the restoration of the gulf coast wetlands. I can remember the first time Senator Breaux spoke to me about the State of Louisiana and what was happening to his State.

During the time I am going to be here on the floor, which will be a few minutes—I came here 15 minutes ago and listened to the remarks of the two Senators from Kentucky and Arizona, and I hope to leave in 10 or 15 minutes—there will be an area the size of three football fields washed into the gulf, gone forever. Huge tracts of land are being washed into the ocean every day. We must have coastal restoration. We can do this, but it is not easy.

We learned with Katrina that had Katrina hit several decades ago—50 years ago—the damage would have been much less than it was because it would have had a barrier and the storm would not have hit the City of New Orleans as it did, and other coastal areas. I have been there. I saw what happened in New Orleans. I have been there a number of times. I saw what happened

in Pass Christian, MS. I will always remember that in my mind's eye—the devastation from the wind.

But this legislation gives New Orleans, LA, hope because it provides a source of money to restore the wetlands that are being devastated. That is the basis for my strong support of this piece of legislation. This bill will help them get the resources which are needed to rebuild in a sustainable manner.

Everyone in Louisiana should know that they have a tireless champion in Senator MARY LANDRIEU. I wish I could express to her father, Moon Landrieu, former mayor of New Orleans, a Cabinet Secretary here in Washington, as I have done in the past. I wish I could express my support and admiration of his daughter MARY LANDRIEU, a wonderful family of 10 children. She has done so much work in this regard. If it weren't for her efforts, without any question the Senate would not be considering and passing this bill, which we will do in a few days. I am not going to be able to say this to Moon Landrieu today, but I am sure I will in the near future, and tell him about the good work his daughter has done here. Her whole family should be proud of her, and the whole State of Louisiana should be happy and satisfied with the work she has done in this regard.

For the first time in the history of this country, the delta area of the Mississippi River, because of the work we have done on it through the Corps of Engineers, and all the other governmental entities, which is one of the reasons the gulf is washing away, that we will be able to for the first time have a long-term project to restore the coastland. It is expensive and hard, but it is so important for our country.

Having said all the good things about this bill and about Senator LANDRIEU, I want it to be very clear in my remarks here today that this bill is not going to fix America's energy needs. It is not going to solve America's energy crisis. We have a failed energy policy in this country. The Bush-Cheney failed energy policies—simply more for big oil—won't work.

British Petroleum announced yesterday that their profits have gone up. In Reno, NV, the price of gasoline is \$3.12 a gallon today. The price of gasoline in Nevada on an average has gone up more than 50 cents a gallon in the last year. The Bush-Cheney energy policies do nothing to alleviate the problems we are having in Nevada and around the country.

This bill will do nothing to bring down the price of gasoline or diesel. It won't come down as long as demand keeps growing and big oil companies are not investing their billions and billions of dollars in profits in new American energy jobs and manufacturing and in developing alternatives to oil.

As my friend from Oregon said better than I, we are marinating ourselves in oil. The country is being marinated with fossil fuel. We need to bring much