

plans to do with the terrorists housed at Guantanamo, Attorney General Holder chose to deliver a speech in Berlin yesterday in which he reiterated the administration's intent to close it.

During that speech, Attorney General Holder acknowledged once again that Guantanamo is "run in an efficient, professional manner." He said detainees there are treated humanely. Yet Guantanamo must be closed, he said, because it represents, as he put it, a time and an approach that we want to put behind us. And keeping this so-called symbol open "makes America less safe" and makes our friends, including Europeans, "less secure."

It is clear from these remarks that the administration is putting symbolism ahead of safety. This becomes even more apparent from Attorney General Holder's admission that closing Guantanamo will be "one of the most daunting challenges" he will face. He clearly realizes what most Americans realize: closing Guantanamo is not a good option if no safe alternatives exist.

In an effort to circumvent this dilemma, Attorney General Holder says the U.S. will not only transfer detainees but also release some of them and try others in Federal court. Nowhere did the Attorney General mention the use of the military commissions process that Congress passed on a bipartisan basis at the direction of the Supreme Court. The Attorney General's comments present a whole range of new problems and potential dangers that some of my colleagues will detail throughout the day.

Attorney General Holder also failed to address recent news reports that the administration was considering releasing Guantanamo detainees into American communities. On April 2, Senator Sessions sent the Attorney General a letter asking him what legal authority the administration has to release detainees who have participated in terrorist-related activities into the United States. The Attorney General still has not responded to Senator Sessions. But it is a question the American people want answered right away.

This weekend I will be attending the Kentucky Derby with well over 100,000 Kentuckians and other Americans, and if I asked every one of them if they thought sending terrorists to our neighborhoods was a good plan, I would get more than 100,000 resounding "noes."

Since the administration has not given any indication where it plans to put the 240 terrorists currently housed at Guantanamo, the Attorney General was asked in Berlin if any of the detainees could be put up in hotels. According to the Associated Press report on the meeting, the Attorney General joked that "hotels might be a possibility, it depends on where the hotel is."

The question of where the terrorists at Guantanamo will be sent is no joking matter—and the administration

needs to tell the American people how it will keep the terrorists at Guantanamo out of our neighborhoods and off of the battlefield. Its one thing not to have a plan. It is another to joke about not having one.

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT DAVID K. COOPER

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, the Nation and the Commonwealth of Kentucky are poorer today for the loss of SGT David K. Cooper of Williamsburg. On August 27, 2008, Sergeant Cooper was tragically killed when his dismounted patrol came under small-arms fire in Iraq. He was 25 years old.

Sergeant Cooper was in his third tour in Iraq. For his bravery in uniform, he received several medals, awards and decorations, including the Army Good Conduct Medal, the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star Medal.

Sergeant Cooper was laid to rest at Bowlin Cemetery in Jellico, TN, about 10 miles south of Williamsburg. Ed Bailey, a friend who watched him grow up, said of Sergeant Cooper, "I don't know where our country keeps getting these heroes."

Ronald and Judy Cooper, David's parents, could tell you. They fondly remember David, who was born in Whitley County and raised in Williamsburg, as a fun-loving kid who enjoyed football, track and playing in the school band.

"David seemed to go straight from being a little boy at 11 to being a man at 12, full facial hair and all," says his mother, Judy. "David played junior-high football. The coach had David and one other player like him. Coach had to carry a copy of these two players' birth certificates to prove they were not over age for junior-high football."

David went on to play defensive end and tight end on his highschool football team, the Williamsburg Yellow Jackets. One friend who played with him, Steven Moses, still remembers David as "hard as heck to block."

David had many friends, who called him by the nickname "Coop." As for David's friends, they all seemed to have the same first name—"My Buddy."

In a eulogy she wrote with David's sisters, Veronica and Vanessa, and graciously shared with me, Judy recalls what David would call his friends: "My Buddy Matt, My Buddy Chapman, My Buddy Black."

Once when David went out with his friends to cut down their own Christmas tree, he demonstrated that he barely knew his own strength. The group borrowed a parent's truck, went out and cut down a big beautiful cedar.

"David was always a big, strong man, even in high school," says Judy. "As they were loading the tree, one of the branches got stuck on the tailgate. David and one of his friends got up into the truck, gave a mighty heave, and pulled the tree up into the bed of the truck and straight through the back window."

David graduated from Williamsburg High School in 2001 and attended Eastern Kentucky University. In May 2004, he enlisted in the Army.

Roddy Harrison, the mayor of Williamsburg and David's former teacher and high school football coach, remembers seeing David soon after he enlisted and telling him how proud he was of him. "He was a smart kid," Mayor Harrison recalls. "A good student, very likable. He had a great sense of humor. . . . We are going to miss him."

David attended basic training at Fort Sill, OK, and advanced individual training at Fort Sill and Redstone Arsenal in Alabama. By 2005, he was assigned to Golf Forward Support Company, 4th Battalion, 42nd Field Artillery, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, based out of Fort Hood, TX. He was soon deployed to Iraq and served as a radar repair mechanic.

David's commanding officer in Iraq, CPT Christopher M. Guillory, wrote to Judy about her son. "I usually called him Coop; [he] called me 'sir' or 'Captain G,'" he wrote. "Whether it was at Chapman's house while they were working on trucks, the drag strip, or at the monster truck shows, he was always respectful to me while we had a great time. David was a great young man, who had shown a great deal of maturity in the time I knew him."

In Iraq, David served as a command team driver and company armorer. He was selected to serve on his command sergeant major's personal security detail for his tactical knowledge and record of performance.

When home on leave, David would tell his childhood friend Matt Mountjoy about the excitement of serving in the Army. He knew the dangers but was unafraid to face them. "He really was a brave person," Matt says. "I never, never heard him say he was ever scared."

His mother Judy remembers that after David's death, a group of his friends came to visit her and share stories about her son. The stories mostly began, "You remember that time when me and you and Coop . . ." Judy says. "They were all funny, most of them dangerous. . . . Were they funny at the time? No. Where do you think I got all of these gray hairs and wrinkles? But time does give us perspective."

David's many friends and family members are in our thoughts as we remember him today. We are thinking of his wife, Amanda Fuston Cooper; his parents, Ronald Cooper and Judy Parrot Cooper; his sisters, Veronica Cooper and Vanessa Cooper, and Vanessa's fiancée Dave Seeger; his grandparents, Wanda and E.L. Cooper; his aunts, Jenny Beglitti, Janice Rutherford, and Joyce Dippel, and Joyce's husband Marty; his uncles, Steve Cooper and John Parrot, and John's wife Sonya; and many other beloved friends and family members.

All of those who knew him will remember a man of many fine qualities, including honesty. His mother Judy

says no one ever had to guess where they stood with David. "David and I had a very close relationship," she says. "He always said, 'Mom, I know there isn't any sense in me trying to lie to you. I know you're just going to find out the truth anyway.'"

What is the truth now is that our Nation must never forget SGT David K. Cooper's service, nor can we ever forget the loss and pain caused to his family by his enormous sacrifice. I hope they will remember that this Senate is proud to honor SGT David K. Cooper for his bravery, his patriotism, and his love of country.

Madam President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the second half.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Jersey.

#### CASTRO BROTHERS

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, two weeks ago, the democratically elected leaders of the Western Hemisphere met for the Summit of the Americas. The Castro regime in Cuba was not invited, because it has violated the democratic charter of the Organization of American States for the last 5 decades.

At the same time as that meeting in Trinidad and Tobago, Raul Castro gave a speech in Venezuela. He said he would be willing to negotiate with the United States and put everything on the table. Many considered this "news."

Well, let me tell you, those comments aren't news to anyone who has followed the rhetoric of the regime over the decades. The Castros have made promise after promise and none of their promises have resulted in substantial change on the island, none of their promises have resulted in the re-

lease of the labor leaders, journalists or clergymen jailed for no crime other than speaking their minds, the end of the network of government spies on every block, or the granting of basic human rights that we in the United States take for granted. None of their promises have resulted in economic freedom for the millions of Cubans who try to get by on less than a dollar a day.

And so it was hardly news that not long after Raul Castro spoke, his older brother Fidel made comments clarifying that nothing would change, and blaming all conditions in Cuba on the United States.

He said President Obama acted with "autosuficiencia" y "superficialidad", he called him conceited and superficial.

I am surprised that Secretary Clinton, in her remarks, would jump so fast to consider that good news.

While Raul Castro spoke at a meeting in Venezuela, there was another gathering going on in Cuba. It was a gathering of state security agents and secret police, outside the home of Jorge Luis Garcia Pérez, known as "Antúnez."

With tremendous courage, Antúnez began a hunger strike to protest the oppressive Castro regime. In response, agents descended on the house last March 17. According to Amnesty International, they have orders to use force against and arrest anyone to prevent them from entering the house, including anyone who could provide medical treatment.

Antúnez and three other Cubans have vowed to continue their protest until the torture of political prisoner Mario Alberto Perez Aguilera, held at the Santa Clara Provincial Prison, ceases immediately.

They will continue their protest until he is taken out of a tiny solitary confinement cell, until he is no longer beaten and forced to starve, until the regime allows Antúnez' sister Caridad Garcia Perez to rebuild her home destroyed by the hurricanes last year, which they have not allowed, as further punishment to these activists.

From his house in Placetas, Cuba, Antúnez wrote me a letter on April 13.

Here's an excerpt, in Spanish:

Compatriotas a nombre de nuestro pueblo cubano persisten en sus nobles y sinceros esfuerzos, sepan que para los cubanos la libertad, la dignidad y el respeto a los derechos humanos tienen mucho más permanencia e importancia que las ventajas económicas que puedan traer los viajes de turismo y las llegadas de insumos que financiarán más que al pueblo a la cruel tiranía que nos oprime.

He said:

Those who continue their noble and sincere efforts on behalf of the Cuban people, please know, that for Cubans, liberty, dignity and respect for human rights are much more permanent and important than the economic advantages that might come with visiting tourists and the arrival of products, which will benefit the cruel tyranny that oppresses us more than the Cuban people.

That is the kind of courage that can break a dictatorship. That is the kind

of courage we should support. And that is the kind of person whose advice we should heed, the human rights activist, the Cuban who sacrifices day and night in a peaceful struggle for freedom, these are the voices we should listen to when we are making our policy toward the Castro regime.

Some like to cling to a romantic notion of the Castros, but we cannot lose sight of these brutal facts. There is no indication that political prisoners are being released, free speech is being allowed or Cubans are being granted basic liberties that we take for granted.

For the Organization of American States to readmit a regime that engages in this type of systematic suppression of human rights, it would have to rip up its Inter-American Democratic Charter as a farce. It would have to ignore Article 78 of the declaration, reaffirming, "the legitimacy of electoral processes and full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms." And it would be sending a clear signal to other countries moving in the wrong direction, away from democracy, that it is perfectly OK to do so.

In respect to the very complicated choices we have on Cuba policy, President Obama has proven himself a man of action. I support his allowing Cuban-Americans more opportunities to travel to Cuba, because I think families should have the chance to be reunited.

On the other hand, and although I support finding ways to improve the financial situation of the Cuban people, I think allowing unlimited remittances was not the right move, when the Castro regime still takes for itself up to 30 percent of all the money sent.

The administration also announced changes regarding telecommunications policy. Let me be clear: in spite of the fact that the regime has rejected such gestures in the past, I hope that it will now allow U.S. telecommunications companies to increase the flow of information to and from the island. That said, we need to be sure to prevent a repeat of what happened in China, where U.S. telecommunications firms helped the Chinese government monitor Internet users and control content. U.S. companies cannot and should not censor Internet searches and block Web sites at the request of the regime.

But mainly what we have learned from these good-faith actions on the part of the United States is that they have not resulted in any change of behavior from the regime in Cuba.

We have traded concessions and gotten only rhetoric in return. We have extended our hand, while the Cuban regime maintains its iron-handed clenched fist.

We cannot allow ourselves to start down a slippery slope of relaxing restrictions, that only winds up allowing the Castro regime to strengthen the iron fist by which it rules.

The press is reporting that the State Department is looking to hold talks on migration and counternarcotics with the Castro regime.