

the change to help bring peace to their nation.

I think these so-called experts on elections in Iraq and Afghanistan are in for a rude awakening. Afghanistan's elections are set for October 9. Also, next month, Iraqis will begin registering to vote with election scheduled for January of next year. Will it be difficult? Most definitely. Will the insurgents try to disrupt this process? Yes. We have already seen that they will increase their attacks.

But the fact is the insurgents are scared. They know that a legitimately elected leader can put an end to this illegitimate insurgency. An elected leader can offer his people peace, stability and prosperity. Insurgents can only offer hate, fear and death.

An elected leader can undermine an insurgency by reaching out and addressing the perceived ills for which they are supposedly fighting for, or expose their motives as pure extremism. An elected leader can transform his country for the better.

Madam Speaker, it will not happen overnight. It took years for El Salvador but it can happen. It is a task that the United States must continue to support without hesitation.

Let me refer to two other examples. Violence and unrest were prevalent in Indonesia. Yet, recently, Indonesia conducted its direct presidential elections, orderly, peacefully, without disruption to voters' access.

Finally, I think we can all remember the problems in Serbia with Milosovic and what happened with his military action. On June 13 and 27 of 2004 this year, Serbia held presidential elections which is a welcome change in the political direction of Serbia and its relationship with the international community.

Remember what Prime Minister Tony Blair said when he addressed this body. Here is his quote which I think rings a very positive note: "How hollow would the charges of American imperialism be when these failed countries are seen to be transformed from states of terror to nations of prosperity, from governments of dictatorship to examples of democracy, from sources of instability to beacons of calm." He went on to say, "Why America? The only answer is because destiny put her in this place in history at this moment of time and the task is ours to do."

We must take these words to heart and stand with a universal toughness. Democratic institutions continue to spread in the world. They are our true defense against the illegitimate attempts of Islamic fanatics to force their own distorted views of the world.

[From the New York Times, Sept. 28, 2004]

THE INSURGENCY BUSTER

(By David Brooks)

Conditions were horrible when Salvadorans went to the polls on March 28, 1982. The country was in the midst of a civil war that would take 75,000 lives. An insurgent army controlled about a third of the nation's territory. Just before election day, the insurgents stepped up their terror campaign. They at-

tacked the National Palace, staged highway assaults that cut the nation in two and blew up schools that were to be polling places.

Yet voters came out in the hundreds of thousands. In some towns, they had to duck beneath sniper fire to get to the polls. In San Salvador, a bomb went off near a line of people waiting outside a polling station. The people scattered, then the line reformed. "This nation may be falling apart," one voter told *The Christian Science Monitor*, "but by voting we may help to hold it together."

Conditions were scarcely better in 1984, when Salvadorans got to vote again. Nearly a fifth of the municipalities were not able to participate in the elections because they were under guerrilla control. The insurgents mined the roads to cut off bus service to 40 percent of the country. Twenty bombs were planted around the town of San Miguel. Once again, people voted with the sound of howitzers in the background.

Yet these elections proved how resilient democracy is, how even in the most chaotic circumstances, meaningful elections can be held.

They produced a National Assembly, and a president, José Napoleón Duarte. They gave the decent majority a chance to display their own courage and dignity. War, tyranny and occupation sap dignity, but voting restores it.

The elections achieved something else: They undermined the insurgency. El Salvador wasn't transformed overnight. But with each succeeding election into the early '90s, the rebels on the left and the death squads on the right grew weaker, and finally peace was achieved, and the entire hemisphere felt the effects.

I mention this case study because we are approaching election day in Afghanistan on Oct. 9. Six days later, voter registration begins in Iraq. Conditions in both places will be tense and chaotic. And in Washington, a mood of bogus tough-mindedness has swept the political class. As William Raspberry wrote yesterday in *The Washington Post*, "the new consensus seems to be that bringing American-style democracy to Iraq is no longer an achievable goal." We should just settle for what JOHN KERRY calls "stability." We should be satisfied if some strongman comes in who can restore order.

The people who make this argument pat themselves on the back for being hard-headed, but the fact is they are naïve. They've got things exactly backward. The reason we should work for full democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan is not just because it's noble, but because it's practical. It is easier to defeat an insurgency and restore order with elections than without.

As we saw in El Salvador and as Iraqi insurgents understand, elections suck the oxygen from a rebel army. They refute the claim that violence is the best way to change things. Moreover, they produce democratic leaders who are much better equipped to win an insurgency war.

It's hard to beat an illegitimate insurgency with an illegitimate dictatorship. Strongmen have to whip up ethnic nationalism to lure soldiers to their side. They end up inciting blood feuds and reaping the whirlwind.

A democratically elected leader, on the other hand, can do what Duarte did. He can negotiate with rebels, invite them into the political process and co-opt any legitimate grievances. He can rally people on all sides of the political spectrum, who are united by their attachment to the democratic idea. In Iraq, he can exploit the insurgents' greatest weakness: they have no positive agenda.

Of course the situation in El Salvador is not easily compared to the situations in Af-

ghanistan or Iraq. On the other hand, over the past 30-odd years, democracy has spread at the rate of one and a half nations per year. It has spread among violence-racked nations and to 18 that are desperately poor. And it has spread not only because it inspires, but also because it works.

It's simply astounding that in the United States, the home of the greatest and most effective democratic revolution, so many people have come to regard democracy as a luxury-brand vehicle, suited only for the culturally upscale, when it's really a sturdy truck, effective in conditions both rough and smooth.

LITTLE SAFETY IN BAGHDAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, let me begin on a note of agreement with my predecessor in the well. I do think what we are seeing in Serbia has been very encouraging. And I am glad that President Clinton persevered in doing that over the opposition of a large number of Republicans in this chamber who sought to prevent him from carrying out that policy. But I want to talk now about Iraq.

We went into Iraq, I thought, unwisely and unnecessarily. I believe that my vote against that was the right vote. But even those who voted for it have a hard time dealing with what has been one of the most incompetently executed major national security policies in the history of this country. And one sign of that is the consistently wrong predictions this administration has made.

They said that when we went into Iraq and when they won the war, and the military part was won very easily, despite what President Bush had earlier said, he inherited from President Clinton a superb military regime that won easily the military parts of the efforts in both Afghanistan and Iraq. But we were told that once the military part was over, the people of Iraq would be so welcoming, that it would be fairly easy. Indeed, this administration punished General Shinseki for predicting that it would be a difficult occupation. And, of course, it was a very difficult occupation.

But then we were told, well, when we capture Saddam Hussein that will take the energy out of the resistance and things will get calmer. And we captured Saddam Hussein, fortunately; but unfortunately things did not get better. And then we were told, well, we will turn over the government of Iraq to an Iraqi set of officials and then things will get better. And we turned over the government to an Iraqi set of officials and things have gotten worse.

Now, we are accused by those who do not think debating public policy is appropriate in a democracy. Apparently, they have this very odd idea that the more important the issue, the less appropriate it is to debate it. Democracy

in their minds should be conducted about trivia; but when we are talking about important issues of war and peace and the lives of our young people and the national security, somehow it becomes inappropriate to engage in the democratic debate that is at the nature of our governance.

But we have an additional witness to the argument that Iraq remains sadly unsafe in many places for this government and its supporters, the United States government. And we are not just talking about Fallujah or the Sunni Triangle. We are talking about Baghdad. We recently had, and I read this in the New York Times last Thursday, a wire service article, the United States government last week, or at least I learned of it last week, recently gave asylum to a 15-year-old Iraqi girl who asked for asylum on the ground that her support for the American military made it unsafe for her to live in Baghdad.

In other words, we now have an official recognition by the United States immigration officials that being a supporter of the American military in Baghdad is so dangerous as to justify the extraordinary act that is a grant of asylum. This is not critics of the administration saying that. This is not Fallujah. This is Baghdad. This is a sad statement, and I am terribly troubled by this. I am glad we gave this young woman asylum given those circumstances.

A young woman who expressed her support for the American military now tells us that it is unsafe for her to go to Baghdad. Well, if in fact things are calmer, let us talk about an election. They are going to have an election throughout the country. Baghdad is one of the places where we are told things are fairly secure.

Well, if it is secure enough to have a free election, why is it so insecure as to say that a 15-year-old has to be given asylum in the United States because it is not safe for her to remain in her own country because she sided with America.

What is clear is that the result of the Bush administration's Iraqi policy has been a sad deterioration, in my view, of the true national security policy of this country; and the misinformation, the self-delusion, the inaccuracy, the infighting, the inconsistency that have marked this policy have resulted in a very, very sad situation. And as long as the President and his chief advisors insist on defying reality and blaming the messengers who bring forward the evidence of this sad reality, it is unlikely that things will get better. The self-deluded are rarely the self-correcting.

[From the New York Times, Sept. 23, 2004]

U.S. ASYLUM FOR IRAQI GIRL, 15

WASHINGTON—A 15-year-old Iraqi girl who claimed persecution in Baghdad because her family cooperated with the United States military has been granted political asylum here. The case is believed to be among the first instances of an Iraqi seeking political asylum in such circumstances.

The girl and her mother, who asked not to be identified for fear of retaliation against other family members still in Iraq, received the letter on Thursday from the Citizenship and Immigration Services, according to Jeff Sullivan, their Washington lawyer. The girl came to the United States last year with her mother for treatment of a cancerous growth in her cervix. The two subsequently applied for political asylum. The mother is pursuing asylum for the father and three other children still in Baghdad, Mr. Sullivan said.

FREE ELECTIONS FOR IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, I find it very interesting and probably somewhat unusual that during morning hour debate three speeches in a row are on the exact same topic.

I listened to the statement of my friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS). I just listened to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK). And I will state that it is important for us to spend some time engaged in debate and focusing on the very important elections that are going to be taking place on October 9 in Afghanistan, and then as was said earlier, six days later the registration process begins for elections that are scheduled to do take place in Iraq this coming January.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) earlier referred to an op-ed piece that actually is what led me to come to take the well this afternoon and that is a piece by David Brooks in today's New York Times in which he talked about the challenge that lies ahead as we deal with the prospect of elections, as I said, on October 9 in Afghanistan and then elections to take place in Iraq. But he used a historical context which I think is very important.

That historical context does go back to March of 1982 when we saw the elections take place in El Salvador. Now, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) and I were elected to the House together in 1980. And during that decade we saw great struggles take place, really throughout the world as we saw nations move from totalitarianism to self-determination, political pluralism. Of course, we saw that in the latter part of the 1980s in Eastern and Central Europe. Really throughout most of that decade we saw the struggle take place in Central America, in primarily Nicaragua and El Salvador.

In El Salvador it was in large part a civil war, a civil war that was fueled with resources that came from Communists in the region and from the Soviet Union, but it still was an upheaval that was taking place. And yet in 1982, as Mr. Brooks pointed out in his piece today, with 75,000 lives being lost, an attack taking place on the national

palace, people actually bombing those in line standing to vote, elections proceeded.

There was a statement that he has in this piece in which he says that one person who was in line said, "This nation," in referring to El Salvador, "may be falling apart, but by voting we may help to hold it together."

Now, it is true that things have not gone perfectly in the war to liberate the people of Iraq. Everyone acknowledges that. But this is a war. There are no guarantees. There are no there is no absolute certainty. But we do know this: Saddam Hussein is no longer in power; and if he were still in power, if he were still in power he would be providing, as the international terrorist that he was, \$25,000 to the families responsible for the bombings of buses that took place in Israel just a few weeks ago. And he would be involved in the kinds of repressive policies and the threat to destabilize his region and other parts of the world that he had been involved in.

We do know that we brought an end to that. There still are terrorist forces in Iraq. But I will say, Madam Speaker, that as we head to this election on October 9 in Afghanistan and then in January in Iraq, it is important to know that it is not going to be a perfect election.

We learned in 2000 that democracy is a work in progress. But as we begin with these elections in October and January, it is very important to note that that will be the beginning point as we move down the road towards the right of people to choose their own leaders, self-determination, political pluralism, the rule of law, those democratic institutions which we have a tendency to take for granted here in the United States.

So I would like to say, let us learn from history. Standing firm to proceed with some kind of election is the right thing for us to do. And I am very pleased that this administration and a majority in this United States Congress are dedicated to doing just that.

DISARRAY ON IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, how can we expect President Bush and his administration to win the war in Iraq if they continue to deny the realities our troops and the Iraqi people face on the ground?

Last week provides several examples of a Bush administration in disarray: Cabinet officials contradicting each other on a daily basis and a President who continues to live in denial. Not only is the President in denial, but his hand-picked Iraqi Prime Minister appeared to be reading off the exact same page when he visited Washington last week.