

## RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

## MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for 30 minutes, with the first half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee and the second half of the time under the control of the minority leader or his designee.

The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

## IMMIGRATION

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I wish to comment on the issue before us today. I am glad we are dealing with this question. It is certainly one that has had a great deal of discussion and impact all over the country as to how we handle it. I think it is one of our principal issues. Certainly, there is a different view as to how it ought to be handled and all these kinds of things; nevertheless, I believe it is important that we begin to do something. Even though there are many other things that legitimately could be considered, of course, sealing the border is probably the first step that ought to be done.

The Senate, of course, passed a bill that was quite lengthy—including ways and means of dealing with those who are already here illegally—and created a good deal of discussion and debate. I didn't support the Senate bill in that I thought it was too broad in terms of dealing with people who had come here illegally, even though I do believe there are some, depending on the situation, who should be given an opportunity to go through the system. But I am pleased that we are beginning to do something.

The first thing, obviously, is to do something about the border. I am going to support the bill before us, although I don't think it is perfect. I think, frankly, there needs to be some limit on building fences. I cannot imagine building a fence, a 40-foot-tall fence, all across the border. All we would have is 40-foot ladders if we did that. But there are areas in particular where this needs to be done. I think this is an authorization where some decisions can be made with respect to how that is done.

There ought to be other things we consider along with it. One of them is that we need to have a modernized system for people coming to the United States. All of us want workers and immigrants to be able to come legally. That system needs to be modernized, made more efficient, so that those kinds of things can happen without taking a very long time. We are challenged with the notion of having some kind of identification system where we

can tell easily and clearly who are legitimate citizens and who are not.

In connection with that, I believe it is appropriate for employers to be required to report as to who on their work staff is legal and who isn't. As I said, this is a difficult issue and one we need to work on.

I simply want to say I am pleased we are moving forward to do something. I intend to support this movement today for cloture. I hope we can do that so we can start to do something about this issue, which is one of the most important issues to all of us.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

## COUP IN THAILAND

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I have come to the Senate floor many times to talk about our great interest in the nations of Southeast Asia and to call for increased engagement and more attention to the relations between the United States and Southeast Asia.

In the early winter of 2006, I spoke about the tsunami and the impact that had on the region. Many of us, particularly from farm country, remember what happened when Thailand's currency collapsed in 1997. It brought a tremendous decline in the region and a decline in our exports. We were previously exporting \$12 billion of agricultural product—much from the Midwest—to that region, and that drop of \$12 billion caused the precipitous drops in the prices of commodities sold by many farmers in the grain States. So we know that it is an important trading partner.

But yesterday, a military coup took over the Government in Thailand while its Prime Minister, Thaksin Chinnawat, was in New York at the U.N. Prime Minister Thaksin had been a successful businessman. He had strong support from Thailand's largely rural population but with opposition to the urban dwellers. In 2005, his Thai Rak Thai—which means “Thais love Thais”—I cannot understand why we didn't think of something clever like that as a name for a political party—captured 374 out of 500 seats in the House of Representatives. The opposition party boycotted it, however. There was discussion of potential corruption by the sale by the Prime Minister of his telecommunications and satellite business. He had controversies with the military, beginning when 87 Muslim protesters in southern Thailand died in security custody, and the Prime Minister was attempting to put his own people in charge of the military.

After the election, the King stepped in and asked the court to review the election. They set it aside, and Thaksin essentially resumed power as Prime Minister even though the election was overturned.

Now, it is with great concern and disappointment that we see the military

coup. Our neighbors in the region have spoken out. They have expressed concern, great disappointment. And it is clear that for the cause of the country and the region, the constitutional process must be restored in Thailand and an election date set for a new democratic government very shortly.

America has had in Thailand one of its best allies. We conduct numerous joint military exercises. Thailand was responsible for the capture of the infamous radical Islamic terrorist Hambali, who masterminded the Bali bombing. We have worked closely with them.

Thailand has been the economic stronghold of Southeast Asia. It is also a constitutional monarchy, with well-developed infrastructure and a free-enterprise economy and proinvestment policies. I think the economy will recover. As far as democracy, King Bhumibol, a benign monarch who served for 60 years, exercised his considerable influence to keep Thailand moving in that direction. Thailand, which, during the late 20th century, experienced numerous coups and military coups, had not had one since 1991. I believe King Bhumibol will push for a democracy and will get back on the negotiations between Thailand and the United States for a free-trade agreement.

As I said, Thailand is key in the region. I have described that region as the second front in the war on terror because al-Qaida-related radical Islamist groups have been conducting terrorist attacks here. It is set forth in a book by Ken Conboy, describing the most dangerous terror network. There is concern that since the bombings in southern Thailand have shown that there are insurgents—some 1,700 people have died—that this might become a haven, a breeding ground for the radical Islamists, rather than the insurgents in the three southern provinces of far south Thailand.

My view is that is an overreaction. I think the insurgents have issues with the Government, but to this point, I don't see evidence that they will become a host for al-Qaida or other related groups. They generally have practiced the moderate Muslim viewpoint of Islam of the Southeast Asia region.

Also, at the same time, I might mention, as we are speaking about the battle against terrorism and modern Islam, I visited Malaysia in August. Malaysia, again, has been a country that has been making great progress. It is a democratic nation committed to progress and development and has aspired to the peaceful and tolerant teachings of Islam. It is a key economic partner. It is our 10th largest trading partner overall. It has been growing at 5 percent annually. We are in negotiations for a free-trade agreement with them. Malaysia imports more from the United States than any

country, other than Japan, in that region. I believe that a free-trade agreement will help build on that constructive partnership in fighting terrorism and ensuring other security issues.

Despite all this, I saw a disturbing trend while I was there; that is, the possibility that some of the more radical views of extremism and intolerance in religion may be raising their ugly head in religion in Malaysia.

Most recently, a Malaysian woman who was born Azalina Jailani, changed her name to Linda Joy, and has been waiting for the federal courts to approve her conversion from Islam to Christianity. It was reported that when her application came to change her religion, it was rejected, and she was sent back to the Sharia or religious courts. Her lawyer has been arguing before Malaysia's highest court that Joy's conversion be considered a right under the constitution and not a religious matter.

We are watching this case with great interest. There are reports that provinces in Malaysia are going to change their law to implement the Sharia, or harsh religious law, as law of the province.

Sixty percent of Malaysia's people are Muslim, and Christians of various denominations make up about 8 percent. The rest are Buddhist, Taoist, and Hindu. We look forward to seeing a decision reasserting Malaysia's commitment to democratic principles and a rejection of intolerant religious laws.

Malaysia Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi has been an outspoken champion of tolerance. He has pointed out the obvious political dangers of taking that road, but I hope he will not succumb to the pressures that appear to be increasing to move down a path toward less tolerant and potentially more extremist forms of religion.

The pressures for adopting harsh religious laws are also being applied to Indonesia where President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has been another strong advocate of tolerance, freedom, and democracy.

The Muslim countries in that region, we hope, will continue on a path of secular, pluralistic, democratic societies or the choice is to see them turn from that path to a potential breeding ground for terror and instability.

Speaking of terror and instability, one country where I am not fearful of that occurring is Cambodia, which I also visited in August. I was stunned to see the World Bank put out a list of "failed states" with the danger of becoming harbors for terrorism, and they listed Cambodia.

To me, Cambodia is definitely heading in the right direction in terms of fighting terrorism. They are making great economic progress. We have been cooperating with them. They have contributed to counterterrorism efforts in the region.

Prime Minister Hun Sen said:

If we aren't active enough in fighting terror, we risk becoming the hostage.

They set up a national committee to fight terrorism. After the attacks on the United States on 9/11, Cambodia offered overflight rights to support our operations.

Cambodia has contributed peacekeepers to Sudan. The United States has provided international military education and training funds for the first time, and we are planning military exercises with Cambodia later this year.

The IMET contribution of \$45,000 is small, but it shows we are willing to work with them and ensure their military has civilian control, appropriate rules of engagement, and other means of conducting themselves in this very difficult time.

There is an economic issue that I hope we can resolve successfully with respect to Cambodia because they are moving on the path toward what we would want to see, and that is democracy and human rights in this part of the world and free markets.

The economy of Cambodia has been growing since 1999, boosted by a bilateral textile agreement, and we believe that has been a reason for the strong economic growth.

Mr. President, I don't see any other Senators wishing to take the floor. I ask for 2 additional minutes.

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

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, Cambodia has adopted international labor rights and standards touted by the International Labor Organization as a model for other developing countries, and they are beginning to flourish. This is a country that has half its population under the age of 20 because of the unbelievable depredations of the Khmer Rouge in the late seventies and widespread murder and genocide. But it is on the right track.

However, with the expiration of the bilateral textile agreement, countries such as Cambodia are now losing out in the competition with economies such as China and India. I strongly support and hope we can pass a measure to enhance economic opportunities such as the Tariff Relief Assistance for Developing Economies, or TRADE Act, that will allow least developed countries, such as Cambodia, to remain competitive by enhancing economic growth. They need to create a better investment environment.

They are clearly not a Thomas Jefferson democracy yet. They have had a very colorful and very deadly past, but we think that with our help and support, they can redevelop what was once Southeast Asia's rice basket—prior to the Khmer Rouge's destruction of small irrigation infrastructure and the execution of anyone with agricultural expertise—again to a strong contributing economy.

We must adopt initiatives such as these for Cambodia and for other countries in the Southeast Asia region. We have to work to continue improving

education, emancipation, economic development, and promoting democracy in Southeast Asia, as around the rest of the world.

Doing so is not only good neighborly, it will not only help the Southeast Asian nations move toward economic and political reform, but it will be the most important thing we can do against the war that radical Islam has declared upon our world and keep these countries from turning to the extremist violence, the terrorism we now see primarily in the Middle East and have seen too frequently, as noted in "The Second Front," in Southeast Asia.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VITTER). Morning business is closed.

#### SECURE FENCE ACT OF 2006— MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 6061, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to H.R. 6061, an act to establish operational control over the international land and maritime borders of the United States.

The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in May of this year, this body passed comprehensive immigration reform. We are a nation of immigrants, but we are also a nation of laws. We must honor both of those heritages. Accordingly, we pursued in this body a four-pronged approach to reform: first, fortify our borders; second, strengthen worksite enforcement; third, develop a strong temporary worker program; fourth, develop a fair and realistic way to address the 12 million people here already who entered our country illegally, but under no circumstances would we offer amnesty.

Unfortunately, at this point it is pretty clear to everyone that we will not reach a conference agreement on comprehensive immigration reform before we break in September. While I have made it clear that I prefer a comprehensive solution, I have always said that we need an enforcement-first approach to immigration reform—not enforcement only but enforcement first.

We share a 1,951-mile border with Mexico, and it doesn't take too much creativity to imagine how terrorists might plot to exploit that border. It is time to secure that border with Mexico. As a national security challenge, that is absolutely critical to fighting a strong war on terror. That is the approach of this bill, the Secure Fence Act of 2006, a bill on which we will shortly vote.

Earlier this year, with passage of the supplemental appropriations, we provided almost \$2 billion to repair fences