

schooled and taught privately by teachers outside of the home. He studies music at Marylhurst University. Master guitar classes have played a large role in his life the past few years, and likely will play a role in his career ambition to become a classical guitarist.

Albert Shieh is a 16-year-old young man from Paradise Valley, AZ, who created a computational tool used to analyze genetic sequence variability in humans, which will help in developing a better understanding of gene sequence variations that occur when a single nucleotide in the genome sequence is altered. Albert's research portfolio, "A Novel Algorithm for Automated SNP Genotyping," holds the promise to find the genetic basis for Alzheimer's disease, autism, and bipolar disorder with highly targeted, personalized treatments. Albert recently graduated from Chaparral High School and will attend Harvard in the fall and major in mathematics. Albert aspires to have a career as an intellectual property lawyer.

Anna Stalker, a 15-year-old young woman from Birmingham, AL, addresses the persistent search for truth through different literary expressions and experiences in her portfolio, "The Reincarnation Journals." In imagistic works, Anna explores the search for truth and beauty through depictions of human interaction and the interactions of the larger cosmos. When Anna's individual pieces are gathered, a larger meaning emerges. Entering her junior year at The Alamont School, Anna's main source of academic and social enrichment is the Duke Talent Identification Program, TIP. Although she has no concrete career goals yet, she is sure of one thing—she wants her life to be a meaningful reflection of her passions.

A 17-year-old young woman from Beaverton, OR, Anarghya Vardhana worked in the field of number theory to develop new starting values for the Lucas-Lehmer primality test. Her theorem/method, found in her portfolio entitled "Novel Method of Computing Jacobi Symbols for Mersenne Numbers," can directly contribute to the pharmaceutical, chemical, materials, financial and information technology industries. Her theory also has broad implications in cryptography, specifically enhancing encryption systems to protect against identity theft. A recent high school graduate, Anarghya will attend Stanford University in the fall, and is leaning towards a major in physics or biology combined with a math major or minor.

Xin—Cindy—Wang is a 17-year-old from Geneva, IL, and is a recent graduate of the Illinois Math and Science Academy. Displayed in her portfolio, "nm2608A, A New Naturally Arising Mouse Model for Human Autosomal Recessive Achromatopsia 2," is Xin's identification of a gene responsible for complete colorblindness in mice. Spanning genetics and ophthalmology, her

results may one day be used to help people with achromatopsia 2, the most severe form of colorblindness, in which people can only see in shades of gray. I wish Xin much luck as she begins attending Harvard in the fall, where she will be working towards a major in a biology-related field and becoming a college professor.

At the age of 16, Steven Wu, of Folsom, CA, is contributing to the scientific world in a major way. Steven designed a computer simulation algorithm that produces superior results when compared with the current commercial software in terms of better simulation of ion movement due to more accurate electrical field data. Steven's project is entitled "Optimizing Quadruple Ion Trap Geometry by Computer Simulations." Advancements in ion trap geometry can improve all areas of laboratory science through mass spectrometry, as well as better monitoring of atmospheric pollutants and detecting hazardous chemical substances. Steven will be a senior at Mira Loma High School this fall. He plans to major in biomedical engineering/bioengineering, combining his interests in biochemistry and mathematics and eventually become a research physician/scientist.

As I said, these young men and women are more than deserving of the awards they have earned. Through hard work and determination, these individuals have already made changes in the fields of science, writing, and mathematics, which will no doubt improve the lives of the many others all over the world. As the President indicated in his State of the Union address, our country's future competitiveness in the global economy will depend on bright and promising young people. Learning about these 16 remarkable students makes me optimistic about our Nation's future. I thank the Davidson Institute for their efforts to encourage and nurture our future leaders in a variety of fields and I thank these young and talented scholars for all of their innovative contributions to society.

#### CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I wish to share with the Senate an important analysis of the current crisis of democracy in the Middle East by one of Egypt's wisest and most courageous voices for democracy.

We all have an interest in supporting democracy. We also recognize that countries in the Middle East, including Muslim countries with which we have close relations, are confronting difficult and divisive social, religious, and political challenges. These challenges have no simple solutions. But we should be concerned with the support that the Bush administration, like many of its predecessors, gives to autocratic and corrupt regimes in this volatile part of the world. It has contributed to anger and disillusionment, par-

ticularly among Muslims, toward their own governments and toward the United States, and growing support for those who promote extremist political and religious agendas.

Saad Eddin Ibrahim is a respected Egyptian prodemocracy activist and sociologist. He founded the Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies at the American University of Cairo, one of the few independent research institutions in the Arab world. He has been wrongly imprisoned, and then acquitted, for his criticism of the Egyptian Government and for his relations with international organizations. Saad Ibrahim is a respected and principled advocate for human rights and democratic values, and he represents a voice of reason and tolerance in an increasingly polarized and antagonistic Muslim society.

His recent op-ed in the Washington Post should serve as a wake-up call for proponents of our current policies in support of repressive regimes around the world. He has had the courage to speak out against Muslim dictatorships, and he not only represents those who oppose authoritarianism but also those who oppose radical Islam and extremism.

All Senators should take the time to consider Saad Ibrahim's perspective, and I ask unanimous consent that his op-ed be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Aug. 23, 2006]

THE "NEW MIDDLE EAST" BUSH IS RESISTING

(By Saad Eddin Ibrahim)

President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice may be quite right about a new Middle East being born. In fact, their policies in support of the actions of their closest regional ally, Israel, have helped midwife the newborn. But it will not be exactly the baby they have longed for. For one thing, it will be neither secular nor friendly to the United States. For another, it is going to be a rough birth.

What is happening in the broader Middle East and North Africa can be seen as a boomerang effect that has been playing out slowly since the horrific events of Sept. 11, 2001. In the immediate aftermath of those attacks, there was worldwide sympathy for the United States and support for its declared "war on terrorism," including the invasion of Afghanistan. Then the cynical exploitation of this universal goodwill by so-called neoconservatives to advance hegemonic designs was confirmed by the war in Iraq. The Bush administration's dishonest statements about "weapons of mass destruction" diminished whatever credibility the United States might have had as liberator, while disastrous mismanagement of Iraqi affairs after the invasion led to the squandering of a conventional military victory. The country slid into bloody sectarian violence, while official Washington stonewalled and refused to admit mistakes. No wonder the world has progressively turned against America.

Against this declining moral standing, President Bush made something of a comeback in the first year of his second term. He shifted his foreign policy rhetoric from a "war on terrorism" to a war of ideas and a struggle for liberty and democracy. Through much of 2005 it looked as if the Middle East

might finally have its long-overdue spring of freedom. Lebanon forged a Cedar Revolution, triggered by the assassination of its popular former prime minister, Rafiq Hariri. Egypt held its first multi-candidate presidential election in 50 years. So did Palestine and Iraq, despite harsh conditions of occupation. Qatar and Bahrain in the Arabian Gulf continued their steady evolution into constitutional monarchies. Even Saudi Arabia held its first municipal elections.

But there was more. Hamas mobilized candidates and popular campaigns to win a plurality in Palestinian legislative elections and form a new government. Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt achieved similar electoral successes. And with these developments, a sudden chill fell over Washington and other Western capitals.

Instead of welcoming these particular elected officials into the newly emerging democratic fold, Washington began a cold war on Muslim democrats. Even the tepid pressure on autocratic allies of the United States to democratize in 2005 had all but disappeared by 2006. In fact, tottering Arab autocrats felt they had a new lease on life with the West conveniently cowed by an emerging Islamist political force.

Now the cold war on Islamists has escalated into a shooting war, first against Hamas in Gaza and then against Hezbollah in Lebanon. Israel is perceived in the region, rightly or wrongly, to be an agent acting on behalf of U.S. interests. Some will admit that there was provocation for Israel to strike at Hamas and Hezbollah following the abduction of three soldiers and attacks on military and civilian targets. But destroying Lebanon with an overkill approach born of a desire for vengeance cannot be morally tolerated or politically justified—and it will not work.

On July 30 Arab, Muslim and world outrage reached an unprecedented level with the Israeli bombing of a residential building in the Lebanese village of Qana, which killed dozens and wounded hundreds of civilians, most of them children. A similar massacre in Qana in 1996, which Arabs remember painfully well, proved to be the political undoing of then-Prime Minister Shimon Peres. It is too early to predict whether Prime Minister Ehud Olmert will survive Qana II and the recent war. But Hezbollah will survive, just as it has already outlasted five Israeli prime ministers and three American presidents.

Born in the thick of an earlier Israeli invasion, in 1982, Hezbollah is at once a resistance movement against foreign occupation, a social service provider for the needy of the rural south and the slum-dwellers of Beirut, and a model actor in Lebanese and Middle Eastern politics. Despite access to millions of dollars in resources from within and from regional allies Syria and Iran, its three successive leaders have projected an image of clean governance and a pious personal lifestyle.

In more than four weeks of fighting against the strongest military machine in the region, Hezbollah held its own and won the admiration of millions of Arabs and Muslims. People in the region have compared its steadfastness with the swift defeat of three large Arab armies in the Six-Day War of 1967. Hasan Nasrallah, its current leader, spoke several times to a wide regional audience through his own al-Manar network as well as the more popular al-Jazeera. Nasrallah has become a household name in my own country, Egypt.

According to the preliminary results of a recent public opinion survey of 1,700 Egyptians by the Cairo-based Ibn Khaldun Center, Hezbollah's action garnered 75 percent approval, and Nasrallah led a list of 30 regional

public figures ranked by perceived importance. He appears on 82 percent of responses, followed by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (73 percent), Khaled Meshal of Hamas (60 percent), Osama bin Laden (52 percent) and Mohammed Mahdi Akef of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood (45 percent).

The pattern here is clear, and it is Islamic. And among the few secular public figures who made it into the top 10 are Palestinian Marwan Barghouti (31 percent) and Egypt's Ayman Nour (29 percent), both of whom are prisoners of conscience in Israeli and Egyptian jails, respectively.

None of the current heads of Arab states made the list of the 10 most popular public figures. While subject to future fluctuations, these Egyptian findings suggest the direction in which the region is moving. The Arab people do not respect the ruling regimes, perceiving them to be autocratic, corrupt and inept. They are, at best, ambivalent about the fanatical Islamists of the bin Laden variety. More mainstream Islamists with broad support, developed civic dispositions and services to provide are the most likely actors in building a new Middle East. In fact, they are already doing so through the Justice and Development Party in Turkey, the similarly named PJD in Morocco, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Hamas in Palestine and, yes, Hezbollah in Lebanon.

These groups, parties and movements are not inimical to democracy. They have accepted electoral systems and practiced electoral politics, probably too well for Washington's taste. Whether we like it or not, these are the facts. The rest of the Western world must come to grips with the new reality, even if the U.S. president and his secretary of state continue to reject the new offspring of their own policies.

#### SRI LANKA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I wish to take a moment to discuss the situation in Sri Lanka, which not long ago was one of promise after a cease-fire agreement was signed in 2002 between the former government and the LTTE "Tamil Tigers." The cease-fire was never perfect, but for several years negotiations on a political settlement offered a ray of hope for an end to the conflict. After April 2006, however, there was escalating violence and an increasing pattern of violations of the cease-fire agreement by both sides.

On July 20, the LTTE closed a reservoir sluice gate in an LTTE-controlled area near the eastern town of Trincomalee, cutting the water supply to about 60,000 people in Government-controlled territory. In response, Sri Lankan Government forces conducted airstrikes over several days against LTTE positions in the area and on July 30 began a ground offensive to capture the reservoir's control point. This increase in violence contributed to the more than 800 deaths reported between January and August, including some in which large numbers of civilians were killed in flagrant violations of international law by both sides, and hundreds more combatants and civilians have died since then.

Politically motivated killings, the recruitment of child soldiers, indiscriminate raids on civilians, targeting of international aid workers, and tor-

ture in police custody are only some of the human rights abuses that have been recently committed as reported by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Additionally, a looming humanitarian crisis exists as the number of Sri Lankans displaced within the country by fighting this year has passed the 200,000 mark, and an estimated 8,700 citizens have fled to India. Road, air, and sea links to the Tamil population in the north have been cut, and food, water, and fuel shortages are severe.

We should be deeply concerned with the collapse of the peace process and escalating violence in Sri Lanka. Although it is apparent that neither the Government nor the LTTE can defeat the other militarily, nor have they demonstrated the political will to stop the fighting and resolve this conflict peacefully. A report on September 13 that the Government and the LTTE have proposed new peace talks is welcome. But the Sri Lankan people have been disappointed countless times before. Several steps should be taken immediately, most importantly to prevent further harm to civilians who have suffered disproportionately.

It is critical that humanitarian aid be allowed to reach those who have been displaced, whether as a result of the conflict or the lingering effects of the December 2004 tsunami. Relief agencies need unimpeded access to the affected populations, and civilians should be allowed to leave contested areas.

The LTTE has been designated a terrorist organization by the U.S. Government on account of its wanton attacks against civilians and forced recruitment of children. These abusive tactics, which flagrantly violate international law, should be universally condemned.

There is also the issue of U.S. support to Sri Lankan Government security forces, who have been responsible for violations of human rights. The Department of State needs to be doubly sure that the Leahy amendment, which prohibits U.S. assistance to units of foreign security forces who violate human rights, is being strictly complied with.

In addition, we should reaffirm our support for the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, which reports on violations of the cease-fire by both sides. A stronger monitoring presence would deter abuses, provide systematic documentation of violations, and help to address the problem of impunity that has contributed to the recurrent cycles of violence and reprisal in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka is a divided country, but its people, whether Sinhalese, Tamil, or Muslim, are as gentle, industrious, and peace loving as any in the world. The Tamils have legitimate demands, but the LTTE's tactics are deplorable. The Government has been divided, and it has not been able to provide the sustained leadership necessary to reconcile the interests of the conflicting parties.