

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.

The chairs of the Tokyo Donors' Conference—Japan, the European Union, Norway, and the United States—need to find more effective ways to convince both sides to return to the bargaining table. There is no other way to end this conflict. The longer it takes to resume a process of good faith negotiations, the more responsibility the LTTE and the Government will bear for the needless deaths of innocent civilians.

REMEMBERING MUNIR SAID THALIB

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today we remember the life and work of Munir Said Thalib, Indonesia's foremost human rights defender, who on September 7, 2004, was fatally poisoned while on an airplane flight to the Netherlands where he planned to continue his legal studies. This despicable crime, in which the Indonesian Intelligence Service has been implicated, had repercussions throughout Asia and around the world and has particularly serious implications for Indonesia.

Munir was an outstanding human rights advocate best known as a founder and director of the highly respected Commission for "Disappeared" Persons and Victims of Violence. He was working as the director of the Jakarta-based human rights group Imparsial before his murder. In 2000, Munir received the Right Livelihood Award "for his courage and dedication in fighting for human rights and the civilian control of the military in Indonesia."

Two years after his untimely and tragic death, the Indonesian Government has failed to properly investigate and prosecute those responsible. Despite the conviction of an airline pilot for his role in the murder, the police and Attorney General's office continue to ignore the evidence and recommendations of a Presidential fact-finding team that has implicated senior Indonesian intelligence officers and airline officials in the crime. President Yudhoyono has rightly described this matter as a test case for whether Indonesia has changed from its authoritarian past. At this point, it appears that a culture of impunity remains deeply embedded in Indonesian society.

The fiscal year 2007 State, Foreign Operations appropriations bill that was reported by the Appropriations Committee on July 10, 2006, includes my amendment which requires a report on progress on human rights in Indonesia, including the investigation of the murder of Munir Said Thalib. If the Indonesia Government aspires to be seen as one that respects human rights and the rule of law, which is fundamental to any democracy, it is essential that whoever was responsible for ordering and carrying out this heinous crime be identified and brought to justice.

REMEMBERING ANN RICHARDS

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Governor Ann Richards, who died last week at the age of 73.

Humor is one of the chief democratic virtues. A good joke can wipe out dif-

ferences of rank, bring down the self-exalted, and join audience and speaker in a common bond. A sense of humor is an especially priceless quality in a political leader because it exposes the pretensions that always seem to accumulate around the state, and it reminds us that we are still a people's government.

Governor Richards is being remembered this week as an innovative leader, a pioneer for women, and, I might add, one tough cookie. But we should also take a moment, on the occasion of her sad death, to remember something else we have lost—her wonderful sense of humor. And if we could take a positive thing from her passing, it might be that we have had the opportunity to remind ourselves of all the many times she made us laugh. We all remember Ann's remark that "Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did—she just did it backwards and in high heels." And we all treasured her earthiness—for instance, when she allowed that she regretted her 1994 election defeat "Oh, for about five seconds."

Of course, there have always been people who have found a sense of humor threatening, especially when it is in their idea of the wrong hands. As Texas columnist Molly Ivins said of the Governor, "I mean, with Ann it was a real problem. . . . They just did not know what to make of her. . . . If they realize that a woman can be funny, I think men are afraid that tone can be used against them. And they don't like it."

The truth is that Ann Richards—the first woman to be elected Governor of Texas in her own right—had to fight against bias her whole political life. At every stage, she was more than a match. In the early 1960s, Ann was forced to help found the North Texas Democratic Women "basically to allow us to have something substantive to do." And asked at the end of her long career why she had entered politics, Ann replied: "I did not want my tombstone to read, 'She kept a really clean house.'" Instead of accepting others' ideas of what was best for her, Governor Richards opened her own path—and everyone who follows her, in Texas and in every other State, owes her thanks.

But there is another danger to humor. As she wrote in her 1989 autobiography, "I was always worried because there is a general feeling that if you're funny you're not serious." That pressure is particularly acute for a politician. But Ann taught us all that laughter draws on great honesty and insight—that depth and humor can exist in the same spirit. "Humor is a powerful tool," she continued. "It clears the air. Once you laugh, your mind is opened and then you are able to hear the other things that are being said to you."

Governor Richards showed her depth in 4 years of successful policies in Texas. She presided over the dramatic growth of her State's economy, and her audits on the State bureaucracy saved taxpayers \$6 billion. She reformed

Texas's prison system, pursued a truly egalitarian policy for education funding, and saw a dramatic increase in student achievement scores on her watch. And through all of her success, Governor Richards never forgot the prejudice she had faced—and so she worked tirelessly to include members of marginalized groups in the people's work. Ann Richards appointed more women and minorities than any of her predecessors. She was responsible for the first crime victim on the State Criminal Justice Board, the first disabled member of the human services board, the first teacher to chair the State board of education, the first Black regent at the University of Texas, and the first Black and female officers in the elite Texas Rangers.

And while many ex-politicians have a habit of fading into the sunset, Ann remained a dynamo. She worked in international law, taught at Texas and Brandeis, continued to write, and campaigned for members of her party across the country, right to the end—in fact, I am sure many of us in this Chamber owe Ann thanks for her help on the stump. What Ann accomplished after leaving the Governor's mansion could have been a full career for someone less ambitious or full of life. And her 2004 book had an exceedingly apt title—"I'm Not Slowing Down," a phrase that embodied the energy and Texas doggedness we loved in her.

It took cancer to stop Ann Richards. And though she has gone, we will remember her as one of the great political characters of the 20th century. We will miss her boldness and her silver tongue. But we will remember what she taught us over a five-decade life in politics: Jokes don't just make us laugh. They force us to see more clearly and sympathize more fully; and they bring us a little closer to the state of equality that is the whole reason our Nation is.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to former Governor of Texas Ann Richards. She was a role model, an inspiration, and an abiding friend to me and to my husband. On Wednesday, she passed away in her home, surrounded by loved ones. I will truly miss her warm friendship, her guidance, and her inimitable sense of humor.

Ann Richards blazed a trail for women everywhere, and she did so without ever losing her spirit, grace, optimism, charm, and sense that we can all build a better world.

She was wonderful about giving guidance. She always made sure to take the time to give advice to new women candidates. When I was considering a run for the Senate, she told me that it would be hard, it would be tough, but if you want to make a difference, then you need to put yourself out there. And she was right.

She was born in 1933 in Lakeview, TX, to Ona and Cecil Willis. The family