millions of Iraqis stood in line and cast their vote. As they came out, we saw those pictures of those ink-stained index fingers, the symbol of the power that is captured in that vote of freedom and democracy.

The Iraqi people yesterday showed their bravery, their boldness, their courage, and their heart. They showed the world that Iraqis, like all people, do yearn to be free. Baghdad's mayor was so overcome with emotion that he told one news agency:

> I cannot describe what I am seeing. It is incredible. This is a vote for the future, for the children, for the rule of law, for humanity, for love.

This morning, and over the course of yesterday, I received numerous e-mails, letters, and written communication. The following letter from an Iraqi voter describing his elation at participating in this historic moment for his country really captures the essence of what the elections were all about. He writes:

> Allow me on this historical opportunity to tell you how happy I am, and all those who I know. It is a great victory for Iraq, the United States and all freedom-loving people in the world. This is the event that children of future generations will read about in history books with great pride and appreciation to all who made it happen.
>
> Today a new Iraq was born. This is the first seed of true democracy and freedom in our country and indeed the whole Arab world. Thanks to all who participated in, contributed to, protected and supported this historical event.

I also will want to applaud President Bush and the American people for their steadfast commitment, support, and encouragement of freedom in Iraq. Peace has not come and is not coming easily. We have suffered tough days and we all know there will be tough days ahead. We know the terrorists are committed to their violent campaign, but they will not succeed.

As we saw yesterday, Iraq is moving forward with the heartfelt support of free peoples all around the world. One of the people who will be instrumental in helping Iraq secure its freedom is our new Secretary of State, Dr. Condoleezza Rice. Last week, this Senate voted overwhelmingly to support her confirmation, and that was a proud and, indeed, historic moment. We are all fortunate to have a leader of her talent and intellect helping Iraq take each momentous step toward democracy.

It was a meaningful and productive week, as I look over the last several days. The Senate also confirmed former RNC Chairman Jim Nicholson to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs, and Michael Leavitt to lead Health and Human Services. Both are talented, gifted, and highly qualified men, and I know we all look forward to working with them.

Great tasks indeed are before us. We have much to accomplish, including, as I mentioned earlier, the confirmation of Judge Alberto Gonzales.

As we think about the week ahead on this Monday, it is appropriate to pause and take note of yesterday's historic achievement for the Iraqi people and for the cause of democracy. As the President said in his inaugural address:

> The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world.

Yesterday, we did come one step closer to realizing this great vision. Yesterday in Iraq we saw that liberty can light even the darkest corners and inspire great acts of bravery. We saw the proof of our deepest held principle: That all people do aspire to be free.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for 10 minutes.

The Senator from Mississippi.

PROUD OF OUR NEW SECRETARY OF STATE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I, too, feel inspired and in fact moved to comment on the elections in Iraq and also some other things that I have witnessed during the last 2 days. I felt very emotional as I watched Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice yesterday morning, during one of several interviews on television.

Specifically, I am speaking of Chris Wallace's interview of our new Secretary of State. It was one of the most impressive interviews I believe I have ever seen in my life. This is obviously a highly talented, qualified, thoughtful, articulate person who has been sworn in to be Secretary of State. I have never seen a more moving interview in my many years in Washington, in fact over 36 years, than I witnessed during the interchange between Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Chris Wallace.

Actually, I found myself to the point of tears as I listened to what she had to say, and how she said it. I was captivated by how she responded not only to the world given the very important position that she holds in answering those questions, but also on a personal basis by representing what is good in America. This is a lady who came from Birmingham, AL, an African-American, who grew up at a time when Birmingham was segregated and it was difficult for her to get the education, the experience, and the opportunities that she needed for life.

She persevered, as did her family, friends, and neighbors, and she has now risen to one of the most important positions in the world that anybody could have. She will be the face of America to the leaders of all of the rest of the world, and it is one that I believe they, as I, will be impressed with.

I will read one part of what she had to say in that interview. Interviewer Chris Wallace noted that he would play a clip from earlier this week at the White House when Condoleezza Rice was sworn in as Secretary of State and she referred to her relatives from Alabama who were there in the audience, and he asked his viewers to take a look. Secretary Rice said:

> They represent generations of Rices and Rays who believed that a day like this might somehow be possible.

And then Wallace continued:

> You have gone from a little girl in the segregated South to being the chief representative of this country to the world. What does that say about the United States?

At that point I felt sure that tears would well up in her eyes and she would have difficulty responding, but she kept her composure while she said this:

> It says that the United States is a place that is living up to its principles, that has had a struggle to do that. I[t] also said in that, Chris, it was Thomas Jefferson who said that the God who gave us life gave us liberty at the same time and, of course, didn't himself personally carry that out perfectly. . . .
>
> It just shows that democracy, if you have the right principles in place, if you have the right institutions in place, it may take a long time, but eventually the aspirations for one society unified despite race and gender and religion can start to come into being.
>
> We still have a lot of work to do in America. I look out and I see that work. But I do believe that in a world where difference is a license to kill, to look across and to see people like me or Al Gonzales or others says that America is trying desperately and, in some sense, succeeding, in living up to those principles.

I thought that was a magnificent testament to her life, what she experienced, what others are dealing with, but also what it means about our country and the hope for a lot of young boys and girls who see Condoleezza Rice in the position she is in and recognize that they can succeed, too, in the American dream.

I continued to watch television, many different networks, and I started seeing the results of the Iraqi elections. It appears that it was a good election with a good turnout. I don't know what the exact turnout percentages are. Reuters reported it as being perhaps as much as 72 percent, I believe. In some parts of the country it was more than that, I would presume, and in others much less than that, but still an incredible turnout. Maybe it will be 60 percent, maybe it will be 58, maybe it will be 62, but the people of Iraq, under the threat of intimidation or death or future abuse, went into those polling places in huge numbers, stuck their finger in that little bottle of dye, and came out and showed it off proudly.

By the way, they are going to have to come to live with their dyed finger the