

most highly acclaimed institutions of higher learning in the world. The knowledge and opportunities that the UC institution has cultivated in our students and communities has inspired great minds and encouraged extraordinary technology for generations. It is recognized globally as one of the world's leading public university systems and we are thrilled that it is becoming an integral part of our community in Merced.

I am honored to join the community in the University's opening ceremonies on September 5, 2005. This occasion is particularly special to me, as my commitment to making Merced the home of the 10th UC campus began many years ago. Throughout my career in the California State Legislature, and today as a Member of the United States Congress, UC Merced has remained a priority of mine. Since Merced was chosen by the UC Board of Regents from 85 other cities as the site for its newest campus 10 years ago, the road has been long and arduous. But the vision and drive of countless individuals and numerous elected officials ensured that we would all share in the celebration of this momentous occasion. With the steadfast support and unwavering commitment of our community, we succeeded in making this dream a reality—we brought the first UC campus to be built in nearly 40 years to Merced.

September 6, 2005 marks the first official day of classes whereby UC Merced will "launch the future" of its first class of 1,000 students from throughout the San Joaquin Valley and the state of California. The inaugural class is comprised of students from as far north as California's most northern county of Del Norte, as far south as San Diego, as far east as the Sierra Nevada and as far west as the Pacific Coast. Remarkably, approximately half of the students are the first in their families to attend college.

Under the guidance and leadership of Founding Chancellor Carol Tomlinson-Keasey, an exceptional team of talented academic and administrative professionals has assembled to build the nation's first major public research university of the 21st Century. This founding team of professionals share in the Chancellor's dedication to education and commitment toward carrying forward the University of California's historic mission of excellence in teaching, research and public service.

Mr. Speaker, I take great pride and pleasure in announcing the grand opening of the University of California Merced. I ask my colleagues to join me in conveying our best wishes and gratitude to all of those whose vision, dedicated efforts and steadfast support helped establish an institution that promises to challenge and inspire generations of students to come. As a Member of Congress it is an honor to represent UC Merced in the 18th Congressional District of California, and as a member of the community it is a pleasure to welcome UC Merced and its inaugural class to Merced County.

COMMENDING THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT FOR DISENGAGEMENT IN GAZA AND WEST BANK SETTLEMENTS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 12, 2005

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me in commending the Government of Israel for its bold action in disengaging from the Gaza Strip and four West Bank settlements in the past few weeks. At considerable political risk, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has demonstrated his resolve by following through on his commitment to withdraw the Israeli presence from these areas. His government has made an unprecedented and unilateral sacrifice in the name of peace, surrendering land on which Israelis have lived continuously for almost four decades—land won in a war that was thrust upon them.

To be sure, the disengagement serves Israeli security interests, since it establishes a defensible line of separation that improves Israel's ability to defend its citizens from terrorist attacks. That is good news for both Israelis and Palestinians. Every day without bloodshed brings us one day closer to peace.

Mr. Speaker, I would particularly like to commend Israeli military and government officials for implementing disengagement in a way that allowed as many settlers as possible to express their remorse or anger while still encouraging them to vacate the area without resorting to violence. Even when some individuals or groups sought to provoke confrontations, Israeli authorities wisely avoided being drawn into fighting and, in the end, successfully and patiently evacuated even the most determined of dissidents. I am full of admiration for the Israeli military's achievement.

A significant majority of Israelis favored disengagement, and I think it is important for them to know that the American people are behind them, supporting them in their struggle against terrorism and in the search for peace.

But the decision of Prime Minister Sharon and his government to relinquish the settlements also creates an unprecedented opportunity for Palestinians who seek a state of their own. After this historic Israeli gesture, the burden to act now rests with Palestinian Authority leaders, who must prove that they can take on the challenge of securing and administering the territory just now coming under their control.

It is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that we will soon see a concerted effort on behalf of the Palestinian Authority to move against terrorist organizations. This means not only bringing to a halt the attacks against Israel, but disarming the terrorists as well. A lull in violence is simply not enough. Terrorist infrastructure must be dismantled if Gaza is not to become a per-

manent launching pad for attacks by Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and other murderous fanatics. And I would urge President Mahmoud Abbas to insist that any group that wishes to participate in the January elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council first renounce violence in word and deed and divest itself of all arms.

President Bush recently noted in his first-ever interview with Israeli television that we are witnessing in Gaza "an opportunity for the Palestinians to show leadership and self-government" as well as "an opportunity for democracy to emerge." Mr. Speaker, I invite Palestinian leaders to make this vision a reality, building a Gaza that is democratic and peaceful, free and open.

In the wake of Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, the international community should also do its part to assist the Palestinian Authority to move in the right direction, and Special Envoy James Wolfensohn is impressively leading the way. But there are additional responsibilities that fall squarely on the shoulders of Egypt and the Arab and Islamic nations.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most dramatic but least publicized aspects of the disengagement was Israel's decision to underscore the completeness of its withdrawal by removing its forces from Gaza's border with Egypt and allowing Egypt to send 750 troops to guard that border. This effectively alters the longstanding arrangement, based on the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, which prohibited Egyptian troops from that region. Egypt has now assumed the major responsibility for ensuring that terrorists and arms do not penetrate that border. Terrorists seek to make a mockery of Israel's disengagement by making Gaza an unrestrained launching pad for terrorism into Israel—just as opponents of disengagement predicted they would. It is the responsibility of Egypt, in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, to win the confidence of the Israeli people by keeping Gaza peaceful.

The wider Arab and Islamic worlds also have a significant part to play. By pursuing normalization with Israel, they will demonstrate that steps toward peace will be met in kind. The very significant meeting last week between the Israeli and Pakistani foreign ministers is encouraging in this regard, as are recent reports of stepped-up Israeli contact with the United Arab Emirates and Tunisia.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud Prime Minister Sharon and his government for taking this wise and exceptionally courageous step toward peace—a step that is fraught with more risks than the media have acknowledged. I encourage the Palestinians to capitalize on this unique opportunity to demonstrate their own competence in governance and commitment to peace. And I call on the Arab and Islamic world to assume responsibility for proving to Israel that unilateral steps toward peace are not only appreciated but reciprocated.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, September 13, 2005 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

SEPTEMBER 14

9:30 a.m.

Judiciary

To continue hearings to examine the nomination of John G. Roberts, Jr., of Maryland, to be Chief Justice of the United States.

SH-216

10 a.m.

Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Aviation Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the aviation industry, focusing on jet fuel markets, airport infrastructure, and Hurricane Katrina's impact on the National Air-space System.

SD-562

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine issues relating to recovering from Hurricane Katrina.

SD-342

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

To hold hearings to examine the impact of Romania's newly implemented ban on inter-country adoptions.

2237 RHOB

10:30 a.m.

Intelligence

To receive a closed briefing regarding certain intelligence matters.

SH-219

SEPTEMBER 15

9:30 a.m.

Judiciary

To continue hearings to examine the nomination of John G. Roberts, Jr., of Maryland, to be Chief Justice of the United States.

SH-216

10 a.m.

Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Keith E. Gottfried, of California, to be General Counsel, Kim Kendrick, of the District of Columbia, Keith A. Nelson, of Texas, and Darlene F. Williams, of Texas, each to be an Assistant Secretary, all of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Israel Hernandez, of Texas, to be Assistant Secretary and Director General of the United States and Foreign Commercial Service, Darryl W. Jackson, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary, Franklin L. Lavin, of Ohio, to be Under Secretary for International Trade, and David H. McCormick, of Pennsylvania, to be Under Secretary for Export Administration, all of the Department of Commerce.

SD-538

Veterans' Affairs

Business meeting to mark up pending VA health-related proposals.

SR-418

10:30 a.m.

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Stewart A. Baker, of Virginia, and Julie L. Myers, of Kansas, each to be an Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security.

SD-342

Appropriations

Legislative Branch Subcommittee

To resume hearings to examine the progress of Capitol Visitor Center construction.

SD-138

2 p.m.

Foreign Relations

East Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine U.S.-Indonesia relations.

SD-419

2:30 p.m.

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Federal Financial Management, Government Information, and International Security Subcommittee

To hold oversight hearings to examine housing-related programs for the poor, focusing on existing challenges in measuring improper rent subsidy payments in housing assistance programs at HUD, as well as Federal oversight of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

SD-342

Intelligence

Closed business meeting to markup intelligence authorization for fiscal year 2006.

SH-219

SEPTEMBER 20

10 a.m.

Veterans' Affairs

To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans Affairs to ex-

amine the legislative presentation of the American Legion.

345 CHOB

2:30 p.m.

Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Disaster Prevention and Prediction Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine the prediction of Hurricane Katrina and the work of the National Hurricane Center.

SD-562

SEPTEMBER 21

9 a.m.

Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

To hold hearings to examine the status of the World Trade Organization negotiations on agriculture.

SR-328A

9:30 a.m.

Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine able danger and intelligence information sharing.

SD-226

SEPTEMBER 22

10 a.m.

Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the financial services industry's responsibilities and role in preventing identity theft and protecting sensitive financial information.

SD-538

SEPTEMBER 28

2:30 p.m.

Indian Affairs

To hold an oversight hearing to examine Indian housing.

SR-485

SEPTEMBER 29

10 a.m.

Indian Affairs

To hold hearings to examine proposed Duck Valley Reservation, Shoshone Paiute Tribes, Water Rights Settlement.

SR-485

POSTPONEMENTS

SEPTEMBER 14

10 a.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.

SD-366

SEPTEMBER 21

9:30 a.m.

Indian Affairs

To hold an oversight hearing to examine Indian gaming.

SR-385

2 p.m.

Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Forestry, Conservation, and Rural Revitalization Subcommittee

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Forest and Rangeland Research Program of the USDA Forest Service.

SR-328A