

difficulty of our efforts is compounded. I hope that the Pakistani national government can do more to properly train and equip these important front-line defenses against extremist elements in Pakistan and/or the border region.

Human rights questions have been raised in recent days in news accounts. That is also a concern we have. I had the opportunity, as well as Senator BROWN and Congressman SPACE, when we were there, to visit a camp where they are taking care of those who were displaced by the fighting in the Swat Valley—so-called IDP camps, internally displaced person camps. So far, that effort has met with success, and thank goodness the Pashtun tradition in Pakistan has meant as many as 80 percent of the people displaced were taken into homes and the government and military didn't have to help them directly, not until they had to go back to their homes and their communities.

We also had a chance to meet with General Kiyani, a very strong and capable military leader, who gave us a briefing on the efforts against the Pakistani Taliban. I believe our national security—literally the safety of our families from another grievous attack here in the United States—depends on our success in South Asia. I applaud Chairman CARL LEVIN for his vision and leadership on this important issue at this critical time, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

We ought to have a full debate in the Senate, in the House, and across America about troop levels. We are not there yet. There has been no recommendation made by the administration beyond the 17,000 combat troops and the 4,000 trainers, but it is never too early to start an important debate about troop levels. We also should debate and continue to get more information about evaluating the progress we are making there. President Obama and his administration are committed to doing that. They have presented to the Congress a series of metrics or benchmarks—pick your word—weighing and evaluating how we are doing on our progress there. A series of tough questions has to be asked on a frequent basis. They have to be answered by the administration if Congress is going to be satisfied with our support, both military and nonmilitary.

I believe we can get this right if we debate it, if we ask tough questions and demand answers to those tough questions of the administration, of the military, and any other question that Congress and the American people want to have asked and answered.

Finally, I mentioned the great work General McChrystal and our fighting men and women are doing every day of the week across the world in places such as Afghanistan and Iraq, but let me also highlight, before I conclude, three people on the ground there who are leading our efforts on the non-military side representing our State Department: General Eikenberry, a great military leader who is serving as

our Ambassador to Afghanistan and who is doing great work there; Ambassador Paterson in Pakistan, who has served now in that capacity under two administrations working very hard in a difficult situation in Pakistan; and finally, Ambassador Holbrooke, who has served this country in a number of capacities, now put in charge of monitoring the work and being a constructive force in both countries—both Afghanistan and Pakistan. We are grateful for their public service, their commitment to our security, the commitment to our troops they have made, and the commitment to getting this right so the American people can have confidence in this policy going forward.

We are not there yet. We are just beginning a full debate. But I would urge our colleagues here to pay close attention and to continue to ask these questions so we can make sure that Afghanistan is stable—as we hope for Pakistan as well—so we can protect our people from another terrorist attack or the threat of that kind of an attack.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

REMEMBERING OUR FALLEN SOLDIERS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this week, an Illinois family who lost a son in Iraq will remember the anniversary of his death. Their son was 19 when he was killed in a vehicle accident in Baghdad, 1 year ago.

Thousands of American men and women have given their lives in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have not been the first to do so in service to our country. Sadly, we know they will likely not be the last.

How do we pay tribute to those lost who have served? The Illinois poet Archibald MacLeish asked that we remember them. In his well-known war poem, written during the depths of the Second World War, a young, dead soldier speaks. "We were young," the soldier entreats. "We have died. Remember us."

And so we do. We remember them in our communities, in ways big and small. We remember them here on the floor of the Senate.

And we remember them when we debate issues of national security that will dramatically affect our military forces. The vote to send young Americans to war is the most serious decision any of us will make on this Senate floor. I have written notes to the families of the many Illinois servicemembers who have been killed in Afghanistan or Iraq. Every letter makes plain the burden we have placed on—and the trust we have placed in—military members and their families.

Finally, we remember them when we consider how to honor their friends in service, those in battle today and those who are fortunate to return home. Over the past years, Congress has tried to keep its promise to our troops. We have tried to provide them with the equipment and the resources they need to

complete the work we have asked them to do. We have welcomed them back with new opportunities, like the educational benefits in the new GI Bill, that will help them take the next successful step in their lives. And for those who have returned home with injuries, we have worked to provide them with the best medical care available.

The young Illinois soldier who died last year has a strong family: mother, father, sister, brother, and friends. They will remember him. In this Senate, we do, too.

BURMA'S FORGOTTEN POLITICAL PRISONERS

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to bring to my colleagues' attention a new report by Human Rights Watch entitled "Burma's Forgotten Prisoners."

The report offers moving and compelling stories of political activists in Burma who have put their lives and careers on the line to raise awareness about the human rights situation in their country.

In the face of threats, intimidation and beatings, they have embraced non-violence to put pressure on the ruling military junta to respect the legitimate aspirations of the people of Burma and support a new government based on democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

We all have been inspired by the story of Burma's most famous political prisoner, Nobel Peace Prize winner and leader of the democratic opposition, Aung San Suu Kyi.

After leading the National League for Democracy to an overwhelming win in the 1990 parliamentary election—a victory quickly annulled by the military junta—she has spent the better part of the past 19 years in prison or under house arrest.

Recently, a Burmese court sentenced her to an additional 3 years of confinement on trumped up charges of violating the terms of her house arrest.

Yet despite the regime's best efforts, it has failed to stifle her will and her call for free and democratic Burma.

And it has failed to stop her from inspiring thousands of her fellow citizens to take up her cause.

The report by Human Rights Watch reminds us that while Suu Kyi is the most well-known democracy activist, she is by no means alone. In fact, the report notes that there are now more than 2,100 political prisoners in Burma; there are 43 prisons holding political activists in Burma and 50 labor camps; and beginning in late 2008, closed Burmese courts sentenced more than 300 activists to prison terms of, in some cases, more than 100 years for speaking out against the government and forming organizations.

Among those profiled are Zargana, one of Burma's most famous comedians, actors, and human rights activists, who was arrested and sentenced to 59 years in prison for criticizing the

government's response to Cyclone Nargis; U Gambira, a young Buddhist monk who was sentenced to 68 years in prison including 12 years of hard labor for playing a key role in the 2007 demonstrations which became known as the Saffron Revolution; Ma Su Su Nway, a prominent labor rights activist who was sentenced to 12½ years in prison for criticizing the government during the 2007 demonstrations; and Min Ko Kaing, a 46-year-old activist who has spent 17 of the past 20 years in prison, most of it in solitary confinement, for his political beliefs.

At a time when the regime is intent on moving forward with new elections based on a constitution that was drafted behind closed doors and would entrench the military as the country's dominant political force, it is important for us to remember that there are those in Burma who have a different vision.

These brave activists deserve our admiration and respect. More importantly, they deserve to know that we stand in solidarity with them and we will not rest and we will not remain silent until they are free.

I urge my colleagues to read the report and to once again call on the ruling State Peace and Development Council to release all political prisoners and begin a true dialogue on national reconciliation in Burma.

SAFE STREETS CAMPAIGN

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I wish to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Safe Streets Campaign of Pierce County, WA.

Twenty years ago, Pierce County residents from all walks of life banded together to form the Safe Streets Campaign and to demonstrate the willpower and strength needed to take back their streets from a plague of drug- and gang-related violence and to improve the quality of life in Pierce County.

Over the next two decades, the Safe Streets Campaign has shown itself to be an effective citizen-led initiative to pressing community problems. It has organized over 250,000 residents throughout Pierce County to fight crime, substance abuse, and youth violence in partnership with local law enforcement, State and local government, community-based organizations, faith-based groups, businesses, Native American Tribes, schools, and youth.

For example, Safe Streets established the Youth Leading Change Initiative in Pierce County high schools to empower young people to lead efforts to address the problems of youth substance abuse and violence. These young people engage their peers and community members in a number of valuable ways. They march against violence. They work to reduce blight in high-risk communities. They engage in peer education on the dangers of youth substance abuse. And they work with Washington State lawmakers to craft

innovative solutions to these social problems. I have met with many of these young leaders and been impressed with the work that they do.

The proactive community and neighborhood involvement by the Safe Streets Campaign and similar organizations improves the quality of life for families and helps provide a safe environment to raise and educate our children. Its work has led to lower crime rates, reduced 911 emergency calls, helped close thousands of drug houses, sustained ongoing graffiti removal, supported recovering addicts and healthy neighborhoods, and helped youth involved with gangs choose a life of hope rather than a life of crime.

Safe Streets is a shining example of citizen initiative where communities stand up for themselves and take their neighborhoods back from the control of drug pushers, gang members, and associated violence. It has been sustained over the past 20 years through a mix of State, Federal, and local government funding and corporate and individual donor support.

I commend the staff, founders, board of directors, and volunteers of the Safe Streets Campaign of Pierce County for the dedication that has fueled this community initiative from the beginning, and I congratulate them as they celebrate 20 years of commitment to safe communities.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION NOMINATIONS

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, today the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship favorably reported out the President's nominations of Dr. Winslow Lorenzo Sargeant to serve as chief counsel for advocacy and Ms. Peggy Elizabeth Gustafson to serve as inspector general of the Small Business Administration.

I am pleased that President Obama nominated such talented individuals to top positions at the SBA. Their confirmation will make the SBA much closer to having an exceptional leadership team in place.

As chief counsel for advocacy, Dr. Winslow Sargeant will bring a unique background to this very important position. With a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in electrical engineering and a background as a very successful small business owner, he is not only well-educated, but well-educated about the challenges facing small businesses today.

He is currently the managing director of Venture Investors, a Midwest venture capital company with a concentration on starting up health care and technology companies. From 2001 to 2005, he served as a program manager for SBIR in electronics at the National Science Foundation. He has also worked at IBM as a staff engineer, at AT&T as technical staff, and as an associate adjunct professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

As the current general counsel for Senator CLAIRE MCCASKILL, whose in-

terest in and knowledge of oversight issues is well known and respected in the Senate, Ms. Peggy Gustafson is an excellent nominee for inspector general of the SBA. She received her J.D. at Northwestern University and, before working as general counsel for Senator MCCASKILL here in Washington, Ms. Gustafson worked for her when the Senator was the prosecutor for Jackson County, MO, as well as when she was the Missouri State Auditor.

With capable leaders like Dr. Sargeant and Ms. Gustafson at the helm, we are hopeful the agency will be more ready than ever to play an important role in assisting small businesses as they continue to lead this country to an economic recovery. We look forward to working with them and to a new era for the SBA and American small businesses.

REMEMBERING BELLE ACKERMAN LIPMAN

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I wish today to remember the life of an extraordinary woman.

Belle Ackerman Lipman passed away at her home in Memphis, TN, on Aug. 17, 2009, in the 100th year of her remarkable life. A beloved wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and friend, Mrs. Lipman is a model for all of us who hope to live life fully and for all the years granted us.

A daughter of Romanian immigrants, Belle Ackerman was born in 1910 in Philadelphia, where her parents owned a general store. Just five blocks away from the store lived young Mark Lipman, who would become the love of Belle's life. The businessman and his young wife moved not long after their marriage to Little Rock, AR, where Mark saw new business opportunities, and then in 1958 to Memphis, TN. There, Belle Lipman became a pillar of the community. Her work in civic affairs was extensive, including service as a trustee with the Simon Wiesenthal Center. She was president of the Little Rock chapter of Hadassah, the worldwide Jewish women's organization, among a host of endeavors in charity, service, and the arts.

But it is not those remarkable accomplishments alone that made Belle Lipman such a special woman. As years passed, her zest for life, for new experience, and to learn of new cultures grew apace. A lifelong interest in travel made her one of the first American citizens to travel to China after diplomatic relations with that Nation were reestablished in 1979. Her travels took her to a hot-air balloon over the plains of Kenya, the rivers of the Amazon, and the ancient cities of Peru. She rode the Orient Express at the age of 87. At 92, she crossed the Arctic Circle. At 95, she visited the mountains of Tibet and a host of other places. At her 95th birthday party, she celebrated the only way she knew how, with verve by dancing the Charleston.

Belle Lipman was a model—a model of how to live life to the fullest and