

President to have the ability to have the support of Vice President GORE as he moves into the transition process.

Governor George W. Bush has a record of bipartisan leadership. I look forward to working with him in that process and in the next Congress of the United States. But in order to get that process smoothly transitioned, we cannot afford to lose any more days than we already have, where 4 weeks that are ordinarily used to begin the very difficult task of selecting nearly 6,000 people to take positions from cabinet levels on down and then to begin the process of planning a legislative agenda for the American people.

All of these things are delayed by the uncertainty created by the current situation, which becomes increasingly clear is serving no good purpose. Every time we move further down the process, the results are the same. Governor Bush is still ahead in the election. And it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that it is entirely appropriate at this time that the Vice President do the right thing for the country, the statesman-like thing for the country, and concede this election.

#### SEEKING PROTECTION FOR KASHMIRI PANDITS DURING CEASE-FIRE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I wanted tonight to spend a few minutes saying, first of all, that I am pleased that the Government of Pakistan has positively responded to India's month-long cease-fire in Kashmir.

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I think many of us know that about a week ago, India declared a cease-fire unilaterally, hoping that it would get a positive response from Pakistan as well as from some of the secessionist or separatist organizations that operate within Kashmir. We have found out over the weekend that Pakistan did decide, as the foreign secretary said, to observe maximum restraint with regard to its troops that were deployed along the disputed border in Kashmir.

Last week, Mr. Speaker, I wrote to the Pakistani ambassador in Washington asking his government to accept India's call for a cease-fire, and I was very pleased again to hear that Pakistan's foreign secretary had indicated now that they will also observe it. In addition, I thought it was particularly relevant that the All Parties Hurriyat Conference had indicated that they might be prepared to begin talks or negotiations with India with regard to Kashmir. Certainly having them come back to the table and have discussions with the Indian government with regard to Kashmir is a positive

sign. Between the Pakistani actions and the actions of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, we might actually see some positive developments over the next few weeks or the next few months with regard to peace in Kashmir.

However, in the midst of all this, I found it very unfortunate that the Kashmiri Pandits, the Hindus as well as the Sikhs, who are a minority in Kashmir, continue to be the victims of violence. Over the weekend again, we heard, in fact, on Friday that four sleeping Hindu children between the ages of 3 and 15 years old were shot and killed in a remote Kashmiri mountain village. This is the third attack on Kashmiri Pandits in less than a week since India declared the cease-fire.

Again, why is it that the minorities in Kashmir, the Pandits, the Hindu minority as well as the Sikhs who have also suffered and some have been killed over the last week since the cease-fire, continue to be the subject of these attacks? I can only hope that with the joint cease-fire that now appears to be in existence and the fact that there may be talks with some of the separatist groups, that the violence against minorities such as the Pandits and the Sikhs will stop, because for too long they have been the victims, if you will, more than any other group, of the problems and of the violence and of the continued dispute over Kashmir.

Mr. Speaker, today I wrote a letter to the Pakistani ambassador in Washington not only thanking him for deciding to go ahead with the cease-fire but also asking that steps be taken to try to end the violence against the Pandits. I wrote a similar letter to the Indian ambassador in Washington, not only commending him and Prime Minister Vajpayee for sticking with this Ramadan cease-fire for the month but also asking that steps be taken by the Indian government to try to protect the Kashmiri Pandits as well.

I wanted to add, Mr. Speaker, that the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Vajpayee, has to be commended not only for unilaterally declaring the cease-fire last week but also for doing so despite the fact that the separatist militants continued with their violent acts over this last week and despite the fact that many domestic opponents criticized his action. Prime Minister Vajpayee has told me many times that he cares for the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits and understands that there will never be peace in Kashmir unless they can live in their homes without fear. I also ask once again that when any peace talks take place over the next few weeks, that the status of the Pandits and their security also be raised in the context of those peace talks. If we are ever going to see toleration of all religions in Kashmir, it is certainly necessary that steps be taken now to protect them, to protect their

security, and that reference be made to their status in the context of any peace talks that might take place.

#### INAUGURATION OF MEXICAN PRESIDENT VICENTE FOX

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, at a time when the world's attention is focused on the presidential election here in the United States, I would like to take a few minutes to talk about a very historic occurrence that took place at the end of last week. I had the honor, along with several of our colleagues, a delegation led by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the Secretary of State here, and several others, including the Governor of California, Gray Davis, to represent the United States at the inauguration of Vicente Fox in Mexico.

This inaugural took place last Friday morning. It was very thrilling because it was clearly one of the most historic developments in modern history for the western hemisphere. After over 7 decades of one-party control where the Institutional Revolutionary Party, established in 1928, had controlled Mexico, we saw an election take place on July 2 at which the opposition party, the National Action Party, and its nominee, Vicente Fox, was successful.

When we look at what it is that actually brought these free and fair elections about, it is very important to realize that it has been the expansion of our Western values that has been responsible for it and was really a coalition that consisted, I believe, of primarily the statement that was first made by Ronald Reagan in November of 1979 when he announced his candidacy for President in which he said he envisioned an accord of the Americas where we would have the free flow of goods and services.

As we all know, that ended up with legislation that passed in 1993 known as the North American Free Trade Agreement. While I know that NAFTA is often maligned, we have to realize that there has been tremendous success in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. We have seen a dramatic increase in the standard of living in all three countries, in large part due to the expanded trade that we have enjoyed.

Now, what happened was that 6 years ago, following the beginning of major economic reforms in Mexico, we saw the call by President Ernesto Zedillo for free and fair elections. He established an organization known as the IFE, the Federal Electoral Institute in Mexico, that would in fact be independent of the government and oversee the electoral process. It worked out extremely well, and we finally saw the