Madam President, I wish to commemorate the sixth

anniversary of what is known today as the Office of the Special

Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. Six years ago, on November

6, 2003, President Bush signed Public Law 108-106, the Emergency

Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense and for the Reconstruction

of Iraq and Afghanistan. The reconstruction effort at the time was

under the direction of the Coalition Provisional Authority, CPA, and

Congress, appropriately, provided for an Inspector General of the

Authority to oversee the CPA's expenditures.

As the administration moved toward ending the CPA and transferring

sovereignty back to the Iraqi people through its interim government, it

became clear that it was important to maintain oversight of the

multiagency reconstruction effort underway in Iraq. In Public Law 108-

375, the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal

year 2005, Congress decided to redesignate the CPA IG as the Special

Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, or SIGIR, with

responsibility for reviewing programs funded with amounts appropriated

or otherwise made available for the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction

Fund.

The law provided, uniquely at the time, that the SIGIR report

directly to both the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State,

and that its quarterly reports be sent directly to the Congress.

As the reconstruction effort for Iraq grew in complexity Congress

asked SIGIR to review additional funding streams; it is now responsible

for reviewing

Since SIGIR reviews reconstruction funds expended by all agencies, it

can compare the effectiveness of different agencies' practices and

approaches to related problems. In addition, the frequent

reorganizations of the reconstruction effort and the widespread pattern

of having some agencies carry out work on behalf of others has made

cross-agency reviews critical to providing accountability for

expenditures. SIGIR has been able to provide precisely that type of

cross-agency scrutiny.

SIGIR's productivity is notable. It has submitted 23 quarterly

reports to Congress and published 4 ``lessoned learned'' reports,

including the comprehensive account entitled

It has issued 155 audit reports, 159

project assessments, inspections, and 96 limited onsite assessments.

SIGIR's staff in Baghdad and Arlington, VA, produces timely, useful

reporting to program managers, senior Department leadership, and

Congress. Its quarterly reports present a comprehensive, closely

documented, snapshot of the reconstruction effort and conditions on the

ground to provide context for understanding progress, or lack of

progress, in Iraq's reconstruction. In recent quarters, reports have

included province-by-province descriptions of the status of

reconstruction and the pace of political change. The audit and

inspections groups work in ``real time,'' so that managers can improve

processes quickly, often before reports are formally published.

SIGIR's reviews have been extremely useful to both the administration

and Congress in assessing the many challenges of the reconstruction.

The performance by the SIGIR office has also been recognized by the

Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, formerly the

President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, PCIE, for

demonstrating integrity, determination and courage in providing

independent oversight and unbiased review of U.S. reconstruction

efforts in Iraq, and for exemplifying the highest ideals of government

services as envisioned by the tenets of the Inspector General Act.

SIGIR's auditors and investigators carry out their work under

dangerous and difficult circumstances. Its employees in Baghdad, in

addition to being separated from their families and living under

difficult conditions, are subject to considerable physical danger. Five

have been wounded by indirect fire. Today I would especially like to

pay tribute to SIGIR auditor Paul Converse, who died of wounds

sustained in the Easter 2008 rocket attack on Baghdad's International

Zone. Mr. Converse made the ultimate sacrifice in service to his

country.

As my colleagues know, the reconstruction effort in Iraq suffered

initially from uncoordinated and insufficient planning and has been

characterized too often by poor contract oversight. The security

situation in Iraq also increased the complexity of executing

reconstruction projects. From its audits of specific projects such as

the Basrah Children's Hospital and the Mosul Dam, to its broad reviews

of thematic issues such as human capital management and contract

administration, the SIGIR reports have provided a frank look at, and a

better understanding of, the shortcomings, the successes, and the

challenges of reconstruction.

So today I salute all the hard-working current and former staff of

SIGIR, SIGIR's long-serving Deputy Inspector General, Ginger Cruz, and,

of course, Stuart Bowen, who has ably served as the Special Inspector

General for 6 years. Their work has been extremely influential on the

evolution of reconstruction efforts in Iraq, and undoubtedly will help

inform future U.S. relief and reconstruction efforts. Their efforts are

greatly appreciated by this Senator.