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NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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SALUTING PRESIDENT MANDELA

South Africa has a new President -- Nelson Mandela. This courageous man's political journey inspires the world: from opposition politics, to decades of imprisonment, to the presidency of his country. President Mandela may now face the toughest challenge of all -- ruling a country where expectations are high, where violence is widespread, and where some wish him to fail.

As he faces difficult decisions in the days ahead, President Mandela can call on another South African hero of the democratic transition: F.W. de Klerk. In the late 1970s, White South Africans were told to "adapt or die" by one of their own. It took another of their own, President de Klerk, to make change a reality.

President de Klerk promised to end apartheid, and he did. President de Klerk promised to hold free and fair elections and he did. So while we all congratulate South Africa's new president on the day he is sworn in, we should also remember the past president who shares in the triumph of freedom in South Africa.

Yesterday, Nelson Mandela said "we speak as fellow citizens to heal the wounds of the past with the intent of constructing a new order based on justice for all." As South Africa's Government of National Unity is formed, I wish President Mandela and all South Africans the best as they embark on their historic path.

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* Remarks delivered on the Senate floor, approximately 10:20 AM.