

their blood, bone of their bone. It was a tough time. But I am flattered that he asked me, and I just hope that I and others are worthy of his memory when we speak of him on Tuesday.

WAR IN IRAQ

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I planned yesterday to be here today to speak about a totally different subject, and then we learned last evening what happened to Strom Thurmond. With the permission of my colleagues, I wish to move for a few minutes to a totally different subject, and that is the war in Iraq. I say "the war in Iraq" because there is still a war in Iraq.

I returned from Baghdad on Tuesday with two of my distinguished Republican colleagues—Senators LUGAR and HAGEL. I came away with several impressions that I want to pass on to my colleagues in the hope that it will give some additional information or insight. My impressions, although not stated in the same way by my two colleagues, Senators HAGEL and LUGAR, I am confident are the same ones they had because we did a number of press conferences and we talked at length. It was a 14-hour flight back. We are good friends, and we all agree on the essence of what I am about to say, although we have different emphasis on different points. Let me say what those primary impressions are and why I think there is such an urgency.

First, there is still a war going on. It is more like a guerrilla war but there is a war. Meeting with our military troops, meeting with our generals, one told us: Every time I send a young man out on patrol on the streets of Baghdad in a humvee, I tell them: Treat it as if you are in battle.

He told us how they know now that our young men and women are being targeted not by some random group of Islamists who are angry but by professionals, the leftover fedayeen, the Republican Guard. Where did all these folks go? They went back into their communities.

One colonel told us they know that people who are engaged in going after Americans are instructed in the following way: All our young men and women wear helmets and flack jackets. They are instructed when there is a disturbance to come out of the crowd. If they are going to try to kill one of our young men and women, there is a 4-inch opening to do it; that is, space between the back of the helmet and the top of the bulletproof vest is where they aim to kill our soldiers. That is not the work of just random and irrational people who are angry we are in their country. How well coordinated and how well organized it is they do not know, and I do not know, but there is still a war going on.

The second impression I came back with is, what a remarkable group of people we have working in the toughest of conditions against the longest of odds to put Iraq back on its feet and

back into the hands of the Iraqi people. I am not merely talking about our military, which has been celebrated with good reason and everybody knows; I am talking about our civilians. I am talking about Ambassador Bremer. I am talking about Ambassador Crocker. I am talking about Secretary Slocum. I am talking about the most talented group of people we have assembled, the people who have had incredible experience in Bosnia, in Kosovo, and in Afghanistan in trying to stand up a police department.

We spent an hour or more at the police training academy with men I know are the best in the world. I know because I spent so much time in the Balkans and so much time dealing with the subject. I know they are the single best in the world. In fact, coincidentally, one of them happens to be a former chief of police of the Newark Police Department in the town in which I attended college, the University of Delaware. These are incredibly talented people working under incredibly difficult conditions, made more difficult, I am sad to say, by the incredible miscalculations this administration is making about how to proceed in Iraq.

Many of us on this floor—I am not unique—have pointed out that winning the war is only half the problem, the smaller half. Winning the peace is an astronomically difficult subject. As I say to my colleagues and anyone who asks, if the Lord Almighty came down and sat in this chair and agreed to give the President and those on the ground in Iraq the right answers to the next 20 decisions they had to make, the next 50 decisions they had to make, consequential decisions, we still only have, in my view, a 65-percent chance of getting it right.

That is how complicated Iraq is. That is how difficult this problem is. But it has been made much more difficult, frankly, by the wrong assumptions that were made by the administration. This is not second-guessing. These are things that, for a year before, many of us argued with them about.

I supported us taking out that tyrant, but there seems to be a tone deafness right now, and that is that the administration thought building the peace would be built upon three assumptions they had, for which, in the hearings we held I never found any basis. One is, they expected to find a fully functioning bureaucracy when they got to Iraq, a literate country that would have in place for each of their departments—think of it in terms of the United States—their department of education, their department of public works, their department of highways, their department of security. We were told, with absolute certainty by the administration, that all we had to do was go in and decapitate the Baathists, that is the neo-Nazis who ran that country, and we would have this infrastructure ready to take over the running of their country. But it melted away. It is not there.

The second assumption was we were told they expected to find an army intact. Again, we decapitate the bad guys but there would be a standing army we could work with. That melted away. It does not exist, and to the extent it exists, it is engaged in guerrilla activity.

The third assumption was we were going to find a police force in the country that once we took the bad apples out of—like we did, by the way, in Colombia, helping them vet their national police—that we would have tens of thousands of police officers we could work with who were trained. There are none, and there never were any.

The result has been massive problems in terms of getting basic services back and restoring security. We have seen looting and political sabotage against power, oil, and water plants, some organized resistance, which seems to be getting more organized. All of this is compounded by years of neglect by Saddam Hussein's regime. Neither this administration nor any of us could have reasonably anticipated how badly he treated the infrastructure of his own country. It is not merely that he did not repair the infrastructure during the period when the embargo was on them, when they were operating under sanctions, but for 30 years.

In fairness to the administration, no one knew how badly he had raped and pillaged his own country and infrastructure. We knew what he did to his people but we did not know this.

Ultimately, Iraqis need to do all these jobs: Administrate, be the army, be the police force, restore security, maintain security, but it is going to take a long time to do that. Meanwhile, we the international community should be filling the gaps, not we the United States alone.

What is worse is we should have known better. We had extensive experience in the Balkans. We had considerable experience in Afghanistan, which is a failure, in my view. We had considerable bipartisan testimony from experts on the left, right, and center, going back to July, that these problems would be protracted and they would be deep. I will never forget two leading generals, the former head of CENTCOM and former NATO director, testifying before our committee, and I remember the parallel they used.

They said we have this incredible military juggernaut which we have planned incredibly well and executed it incredibly well, but we should in tandem be planning for the occupation of Iraq. There was virtually no planning, but that is water over the dam.

That is not just me. Ask my Republican colleagues who deal with this. There was no planning. The question now, and my purpose today, is not to say, aha, look at the mistake you made, you did not listen. It is to say, let's get over this. Now that we realize and the whole world understands these infrastructures do not exist, it is time to internationalize the effort.

First, we need a significant infusion of military and civilian police to fill

the gap of the Iraqi police. On another date, I will spend more time on this, but there are 79,000 Iraqi police spots we have to fill. Our experts on the ground in Iraq say there is a need immediately for 5,800 European crack police, the gens de guerre, to be brought in to maintain the peace and security of the citizens, stop the looting, make the traffic lights work, investigate the murders and the rapes, while we are training 80,000 new police officers.

There is a gigantic vacuum, and our own people on the ground say we need help now. So I implore the President to get over his feelings about the Europeans, the French and the Germans in particular, and seek their assistance because I believe they are ready to assist. They need to be asked.

As I said, we are starting from scratch to build an Iraqi police force of 73,000 people with 18,000 cars. Now we have about 30,000 Iraqi police, all ill trained, with about 200 cars. How long will it take to get to 73,000, which is a very thin blue line? The estimate of many is about 5 years. So what do we do in the meantime if we do not seek to internationalize this?

Second, we need to sustain and probably increase our military forces in Iraq, and it need not be more Americans. We should be reaching out to NATO. When I have spoken to Lord Robertson, when I have spoken to the head of NATO, and spoken to the country specific, I am told they are prepared to send hard, tough, fighting troops into Iraq, but they want to be asked. To the best of my knowledge, the President and Secretary of Defense and the Vice President have decided not to ask. If that is true, that is foolhardy.

We need between 30,000 and 60,000 forces there, and they should be NATO forces. Meanwhile, the notion that has been floated out of the Pentagon by Mr. Rumsfeld, as he suggested 6 weeks ago that we could get down to 30,000 troops by the end of the year, is pure fantasy. Who are we kidding? Get down to 30,000 troops within 6 months? Unless he has a plan no one has ever heard of internationalizing this to the extent that they are backfilled with European and other forces.

We need to get more troops in. They need to be effective, and the best place to look is NATO. As I said, I met with Secretary General Robertson last weekend. NATO is willing to help, but the administration has to ask. So please ask, Mr. President.

Third, we are going to need significant resources to get all of this done. Just a couple of weeks ago my committee, headed by Senator LUGAR, had testimony from leading members of the administration saying do not worry; basically, the oil revenues are going to take care of all of this. What a joke. We have a leading oil man appointed by the administration in Baghdad with whom we sat and met, my two colleagues and I. He said we will get to 1 million barrels a day maybe by the end

of the summer; maybe by the end of 2004, an average of 2.4 million a day.

Let me explain that. It means there may be the ability to generate \$5 billion worth of revenue this year and \$14 billion next year; and it costs us \$3 billion a month just to maintain our troops there.

It is time we start leveling with the American people. Maybe the most important impression was our folks on the ground are doing an incredible job. I am not being solicitous. I am not just saying we are doing a great job. They are doing an incredible job. The most positive thing I came away with: I went over despondent about a lack of a political game plan of transferring government to the Iraqis. I am truly impressed with Ambassador Bremer and his team. They have that process underway, after we finally discarded what I assume was the Cheney-Rumsfeld idea of putting Mr. Garner in there and finding Mr. Chalabi—I may be wrong about that; if I am, I apologize for sounding harsh.

But the President was wise enough to recognize the model they originally came up with on the political transition—General Garner is a fine man, and the expatriates being the basis upon which the government would be stood up quickly—was not realistic, and he made a swift change. I implore the President to make a similar change in thinking about police and the military.

Nobody back home understands. The American people have not been given the facts, in my view, to be able to fully understand how monumental the task is we are undertaking, how long it will take and how much it will cost, how many troops. The President needs to go to the American people and tell them.

I will end where I began 10 months ago in this Chamber after my hearings in July—almost a year ago, when I chaired the Foreign Relations Committee. I said then and I repeat it: The one thing all who come out of the Vietnam era generation can agree on is, regardless of what our view was on the war at the time, no foreign policy, no matter how well fashioned, can be sustained without the informed consent of the American people.

As I have said repeatedly, folks in my State and around the country thought when we went in that Johnny and Jane would come marching home as they did after gulf I, immediately after the war. There is a bit of shock and dismay on the part of the families of the National Guard and the reservists when they find out their dads and moms are not coming home; they are being extended.

We knew ahead of time they would have to be extended. You knew it, I knew it. We did not tell. We told them, the President didn't. Mr. President, please go on television, tell the American people what is expected of them now. They will respond. We are a mature people. They don't like the fact that 161,000 Americans have to stay

there for an extended period of time. But we have to tell them, and tell them why it is so important it be done. It is in the naked self-interests of the United States that we get this right—that we stand up with a government at the end of the day that is at least more democratic, is not a breeding ground for terror, and is a stabilizing influence in the region because it will save the lives of our children and our grandchildren if we do it right. We have an opportunity to do it right. This is doable. But not on the cheap, and not without leveling with the American people.

Nearly 2 months ago, on May 1, President Bush landed on the USS *Abraham Lincoln* to address our troops and the Nation. Behind them was a large banner that read "Mission accomplished." Our troops did accomplish their first mission, a remarkable mission in Iraq, of ridding its people of the tyrannical regime of Saddam Hussein. But the larger and more difficult mission is building the peace in Iraq and is far from accomplished. In fact, it has only just begun.

I respectfully suggest it is time for the President to explain that to the American people, to talk to us straight about the hundreds of thousands of troops who will be needed immediately and the tens of thousands of troops who will be needed for a long time, and the tens of billions of dollars that will be needed, and how we will have to energize the international community as donor nations to come up with that money so we do not hold the bag for it all. It will take many years.

When Senator LUGAR and I held our hearings, everybody kept saying, the day after the war, and we said, no, it is not the day after, it is the decade after Saddam Hussein is down—the decade after. I have not found one reasonable person who suggests that the United States will not be heavily involved, even after there is a transition to an Iraqi Government, for at least the next 3 to 5 years. If anybody thinks it is less than that, they are kidding themselves. If it is less than that, it will mean we will lose the peace.

I know it is dangerous, and I can see my colleague looking at me; it is dangerous to prognosticate in this business because everybody remembers exactly what you said. But I am saying the same thing I said last July. It was a worthy goal to take down Saddam Hussein. He was a danger to his people. The one thing the whole world has seen is what a madman he was. He has killed 300,000 of his own people at least. Mass graves abound. We did a worthy and noble thing. But we must internationalize this effort now. Now. Now. We must level with the American people.

I conclude by saying what the troops told us. You have been on these missions. These young men and women we have dinner with, these young troops we go out and ride around with, the people we spend our time with in the

country, they want to know in Baghdad, are we going to support them? They know how tough this is. They know how many more of them are going to die. They know their life is at risk. They know this is an incredibly difficult undertaking, and they are wondering why, when they pick up the papers back home, it is not being stated that way. It is being treated as if this is over. The American people deserve to be leveled with.

Everyone here knows, whether we say another year or 10, whether it is 75,000 troops or 160,000, whether it is \$1 billion or \$20 billion or \$40 billion, we all know it is a lot more than any of us are telling the American people.

It is time, as one of my Republican colleagues said, to tell the truth. I am not suggesting the President is lying. He is not. I am suggesting the American people do not have any idea what we have signed them on to. We had better tell them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

SENATOR STROM THURMOND

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I take a moment to send my thoughts and prayers to the family of Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, a man of a remarkable career who made his mark in the permanent history books of the Senate and the country. I know he will be remembered at the funeral next week that many colleagues will be attending. We send our thoughts and prayers to his family at what I am sure is a difficult time as they face this loss.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG AND MEDICARE IMPROVEMENT ACT

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, last night's vote on the Medicare prescription drug bill is one of the toughest votes I have cast since becoming Senator in 2001.

As the people of Michigan know, I made the issue of adding a prescription drug benefit to Medicare one of the centerpieces of my 2000 campaign. I told Michiganians that if they sent me to the Senate, I would fight to add a meaningful prescription drug benefit to Medicare. I also said I would do everything within my power to lower prescription drug prices for everyone.

For years, I have crisis-crossed Michigan and listened to seniors who desperately need help with paying for their medicines. I have heard from middle class, retired people who have had to cut pills in half because they could not afford to pay for their full prescriptions. I have gone with seniors to Canada where they could actually afford to buy American-made prescription drugs because they cost so much less north of the border.

Since 2001, I have sponsored and cosponsored bills that would provide a comprehensive prescription drug ben-

efit in Medicare and lower prices for all Americans. These are the goals that I have fought for and have spoken out for on this Senate floor time and time again.

Specifically, I have cosponsored S. 7, a bill that would provide a meaningful Medicare prescription benefit. And I have co-sponsored bills to open the border to Canada to allow families to purchase low-cost, F.D.A.-approved drugs made in the U.S. that have been sold in Canada for half the price or less.

I have co-sponsored legislation creating more competition to lower prices by allowing more generics, or unadvertised brands on the market and helping States set up bulk purchasing programs to lower prices for those without health insurance to help pay for their prescription drugs.

I have particularly focused on lowering prices for all Americans because the soaring cost of prescription drugs is hurting all of us.

When a brand-name prescription drug goes up in price three times the rate of inflation, everyone is affected by that. It hurts our seniors, many of whom must pay for prescriptions directly out of their pockets. It harms our businesses by dramatically increasing their health care costs. The average small business has seen their health care premiums double in the last 5 years. This affects our ability to grow and to provide new jobs.

The bill that the Senate passed last night only accomplishes some of my goals. It has its strengths and weaknesses. It is a step in the right direction, but only a beginning step.

On a positive note, this bill establishes an outpatient prescription drug benefit for all seniors for the first time since the entire program was created in 1965.

Currently, Medicare only covers prescription drugs for those who are in the hospital. As we all know, this has been a seniors challenge for our seniors.

Unfortunately, the benefit is confusing and will vary depending upon decisions made by insurance companies, but at least this bill establishes for the first time that there should be a benefit.

The bill provides a benefit for low income seniors who make less than 160 percent of poverty. Married couples earning less than \$19,392 per year will receive a comprehensive prescription drug plan. This will help approximately 350,000 seniors in Michigan. Again, this is a step in the right direction.

This bill also provides a catastrophic benefit for seniors who have extraordinary prescription drug bills each year. For some seniors, it is not uncommon for them to have monthly prescription drug bills of over \$1,000 per month or \$12,000 per year. This bill has a catastrophic cap at \$5,800 per year. After \$5,800, seniors would only have to pay 10 percent of additional out-of-pocket costs in one year. This is a positive step.

This bill also includes several improvements in payments for Medicare

providers. Since 1997, many Medicare providers have been underpaid and have been forced to make difficult decisions regarding serving new Medicare patients. Specifically, this bill provides increased payments for rural providers such as hospitals, ambulance services, and home health agencies. This is important to the people of Michigan.

The bill also makes great strides in helping to lower prescription drug prices for all Americans. For the first time, we have closed loopholes in our drug laws that have allowed brand name drug makers to keep lower cost generic drugs off the market. This bill will mean that there will be more competition between similar drugs and thus lower prices for families, for businesses, and for everyone using prescription drugs. This is a positive aspect that I have been fighting for, for the last 2½ years.

It also includes a provision that I have long championed that will allow pharmacies and families to purchase lower priced prescription drugs from Canada. In some cases, the same drugs that are sold in Canada can cost up to 50, 60, or 70 percent less than they cost here in the U.S. That makes absolutely no sense.

Regrettably, opponents of this type of free market competition attached a provision that allows the Secretary of Health and Human Services to stop its implementation. I hope that HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson will not block it and allow U.S. citizens to get lower priced, FDA approved, American made prescription drugs from Canada.

Unfortunately, this bill has serious drawbacks as well which is why it has been such a difficult situation for me. The Republican Congress, along with the President, has not been willing to allocate enough funding to provide a comprehensive benefit to most of our middle class seniors.

They arbitrarily picked a figure of \$400 billion in total spending for 10 years even though we know that it would take twice that amount to provide American seniors with the same kind of prescription drug coverage that we in the Congress enjoy. Why was that decision made? I have always said this is a question of values and priorities.

Which is more important, or more effective, putting money in people's pockets and improving the quality of life for Americans, another trillion dollar tax cut for the privileged few, or meaningful prescription drug benefit that will help our seniors and their families afford live saving medicine and put money back in people's pockets through lower prescription drug prices.

The answer to that question, I believe, is very clear. Unfortunately, misplaced priorities have resulted in a prescription drug plan that is much less than American families need and deserve.

There are many short-comings in this plan that I will continue to do everything in my power to correct.