

integrity of the markets and protecting, ultimately, the investors and the retirees who are dependent on the information they derive from these accounting statements.

It is absolutely essential we have this debate, this discussion, and that we are intent on making sure we get to a secure system and that this not be a political issue. This is about making sure our financial markets work effectively.

I look forward to working with my senior colleague from Connecticut who has done such an outstanding job on a whole host of these issues. We are working to gain the public's trust. One way to do that is to make sure independent auditors are exactly that— independent.

I think we need to respond. I hope we can do that quickly. We need to do it thoughtfully because we do not want to cause more problems than we fix. It is one of those things where making sure it is done right is very important because we are tinkering with the fundamentals of our economy. But we need to have good accounting statements to make sure people can make decisions on their investments in a way that is sensible and true to the facts as they stand.

I appreciate very much this opportunity to work with Senator DODD.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. REID). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida may proceed.

CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO CENTRAL ASIA

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, over the recess I had the privilege of going to the other side of planet Earth in the area of central Asia with 8 other of our colleagues. The delegation was led by the Senator from Connecticut, Mr. LIEBERMAN, and the Senator from Arizona, Mr. MCCAIN. In 7 days, we visited the heads of government of 6 nations. And what was a delightful surprise to our delegation was the fact that each one of the leaders of those countries wanted to express appreciation to the United States for us being involved in their countries to help rid them of terrorists.

They implored us, after this initial thrust of military success, not to turn on our heels and walk away. Indeed, if you look back in history, the United States made a mistake a little over a decade ago. We were involved, in the 1980s, in Afghanistan—albeit clandestine—as we were helping the Afghans

try to repel and expel the Soviet Union, which was trying to take over Afghanistan. And when the Soviet Union was whipped and tucked its tail between its legs and left, then the United States left also. That created a political vacuum—a vacuum that begs to be filled by political leaders, and that is the vacuum that was filled by the terrorists—ultimately, the very repressive Taliban regime.

So let's take a lesson from history and let's not repeat it. Let's listen to those leaders who said they don't necessarily want us to be there in the long run in a military situation, but they want our help in advising them technically, agriculturally, about communication, and indeed in Afghanistan about stabilizing the country, about setting up a national government, about setting up a national army so they can protect themselves from these outside forces and from these insidious forces that well up within, which was the terrorist organizations.

It was quite illuminating. We met with the Prime Minister of Turkey, the President of Uzbekistan, and the President of Turkmenistan.

We then flew into Bagram airfield with lights out in the middle of the night for security reasons. Those young pilots were using night vision equipment, and I am telling you, Mr. President, they greased that plane on to that runway with no runway lights, no airplane lights, and lights out on everything because of snipers, mortar, and rocket fire.

The descent was rapid, and the pilot did evasive maneuvers with the plane. The first instruction given to us before we stepped off the plane was: Do not dare step off the concrete tarmac because of the known and the unknown landmines.

The sergeant who escorted me through the darkness told me about his buddy who had his foot blown off just 2 days before traversing a footpath that the sergeant who escorted me had traversed many times before and had escaped the lethal explosion of a landmine that ultimately caught his buddy and caused the amputation of his foot.

We had the opportunity to meet with the interim Government of Afghanistan, with Chairman Hamid Karzai and his cabinet. What was very distinct—not only their enthusiasm, their absolute intent on making a success of a new kind of government that was not a repressive one—was the fact that, for the first time, the cabinet had a new minister: A minister of women's affairs, a prominent Afghan woman. As we met with that cabinet, they shared that message about being involved.

Chairman Karzai gave us an example of how for the long run he needed our help. He explained to us he was so appreciative of the humanitarian assistance and that it looked as if, for this winter, most of the starvation had been avoided but for the long run they needed agricultural assistance. They needed

the rains to come because without that, the farmers were not going to be able to grow crops in the spring, and they were going to return to growing poppies and, thus, in the drug trade and, thus, all the more ripe for exploitation by the terrorists we are trying to get rid of in that part of the world.

All of our Senators would be so proud of what we saw on the faces of those young men and women in the uniform of our country at Bagram airfield in the dead of night. They were absolutely resolute in being able to successfully fulfill their mission. They had tasted success. They knew their cause was just, and they were absolutely intent on seeing it through to a successful conclusion.

Whether we met young Americans in uniform in the neighboring countries, such as Uzbekistan to the north or Pakistan to the south, whether we met Americans in the diplomatic service or in the humanitarian component of our assistance, whether we met those young men and women in full-combat, cold-weather gear at the Bagram airfield right outside of Kabul, Afghanistan, or whether we met our marines at the airfield on the coast of Pakistan on the Arabian Sea, or whether we met our sailors and our pilots out on the aircraft carrier, the *Theodore Roosevelt*, off the Pakistani coast, they all had that conviction of expression on their faces: Absolutely intent on persevering and succeeding, knowing their cause is just.

We spent a good hour with the President of Pakistan. It has been said many times that President Musharraf, well before September 11, offered leadership by recognizing that he had a problem with terrorism in his own country. In early June, well before September 11, he had met with religious leaders and said: We are going to have to start dampening down the religious extremism. In his country, there are 3,000 of these madrasahs, which are religious extremist schools.

The President of Pakistan recognized he had a problem because where poverty exists and fathers and mothers cannot support their children, these children get shipped off to these religious schools where they provide the basic necessities for them but in the process train them in the ways of terrorism and extremism and teach them a doctrine that is not taught in the Koran.

The President of Pakistan saw well ahead of September 11 that he was going to have a problem. He started laying the groundwork so that when the awful events of September 11 came and he knew he was going to have to make a choice—was he going to fight with a coalition of nations led by the United States to rid that part of the world of terrorism, including the terrorists in his country, or was he going to stay with the longstanding policy where the Government of Pakistan had even recognized officially, diplomatically, the Taliban Government, and

was he going to break relations with them and cast his lot with the nations of the world that were trying to get rid of the terrorists—he did just that.

Of course, at the time my colleagues and I were there, we had another reason to be concerned about that part of the world because two armies were amassing on either side of the Kashmir border, two armies of nuclear nations which portend awful things for the peace of this world should they get into a hot war, not even to speak of how it would drain Pakistan's energies and military activities away from helping the coalition of nations try to get the Taliban, the al-Qaida, and the terrorist leaders as they attempt to flee into Pakistan.

We went up to the Khyber Pass and met with the commanding general who was commanding about 33,000 troops all in that sector of the Afghan-Pakistan border where we are concerned that al-Qaida are trying to flee.

The general assured us that with all of their troops on the border, plus all of their friendships and lines of communication they have built with the native Pakistanis in all of those villages, they will know when one of those terrorists comes across.

At the time we were there, which was about 2 weeks ago, they had already captured in excess of 200 al-Qaida. We went on to Muscat, Oman, and met with the Sultan of Oman. Again, it is a different kind of government in that region of the world and yet one that is very necessary in helping us as we knit and keep together this fragile coalition of nations, most of them being Muslim, as we fight terrorism in that part of the world.

I believe the leaders in Central Asia now recognize terrorist activity is one of the greatest threats to the stability of their countries, and I believe they are now much more enthused in supporting the coalition efforts because of the extraordinary success we have had.

I will conclude with this: The commander in chief of the Central Command I have the pleasure of having reside in my State, General Franks. He is stationed at MacDill Air Force Base where not only the Central Command is located but also the Special Operations Command. We have another commander in chief on the same base.

I think the military success of this war effort thus far is illustrated by the photograph we saw on the front pages of so many of our newspapers, which was the Special Operations troop, American, on horseback, riding with other Afghan troops on horseback. The difference was the U.S. Special Operations person was calling in pinpoint airstrikes from his vantage point traversing the terrain on horseback. It is a combination of low tech and high tech. It is a commitment of very specialized troops, few in number, but backed up by the superiority of the skies, the precision of the weapons, and the instant communication between the low-tech troop on horseback, or on

the ground, with the high-tech arsenal represented by the skies and by the pinpoint accuracy of the weapons.

So the terrorist is in a compound, suddenly there is an explosion, and he flees and all of a sudden sighs relief that he escaped, and then whammo, the second precision pinpoint-accurate weapon hits. Talk about demoralizing the enemy.

Why have we had success? Because of the combination of that and, in conclusion, because of the absolute determination of our men and women in uniform. That is what made me so proud for all of us, what made all of us in our nine-senator delegation so appreciative that we could express to those troops whom we saw the appreciation of the American people for their dedication and for their success.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAYTON). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Florida.

BOWL GAME WAGERS SUCCESSFUL FOR FLORIDA

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, as long as we have a lull, on a much lighter note I note for my colleagues some of the conversations I had prior to the Christmas recess and prior to all the bowl games. It so happened Florida had three college teams in bowl games, and so in trying to be a good Senator representing my State of Florida, I went to the respective Senators from the States with the other three teams.

Given the fact that the Gator Bowl in Jacksonville was being waged between Florida State University and Virginia Tech, I naturally went to Senator WARNER and Senator ALLEN and suggested we have a friendly wager on the game. What Senator ALLEN and I agreed to was we would wager a crate of Florida oranges and a bushel of Virginia peanuts.

I am one who absolutely loves peanuts, and I am going to thoroughly enjoy those Virginia peanuts that are going to be presented to me by Senator ALLEN next week. We will have an appropriate ceremony and may even have the president of Florida State University present for this solemn occasion.

Then I went to the other NELSON in the Senate, our fellow freshman, BEN NELSON of Nebraska, and suggested that something as monumental as the national championship being played in the Rose Bowl in Pasadena was certainly worth us determining we would put something of specialty of our State on the line, backing up our boast that our team was going to be the national

champion: The University of Miami versus Nebraska, the Hurricanes versus the Cornhuskers. So we determined in a friendly conclusion it would be a crate of Florida oranges versus a box of Omaha steaks. I am already stoking up my grill.

For the third bowl game of a Florida college team, the Orange Bowl in Miami pitting the University of Florida Gators against the Maryland Terrapins, I searched and searched for Senator MIKULSKI, and I could not find her in the remaining hours of the session. I finally found Senator SARBANES. I explained what I had done in the other bowl game and what was on the line in Miami in the Orange Bowl. Senator SARBANES chose not to engage in a friendly wager, of which I have just had the occasion today to remind him. He suggested he was wise beyond his years in not taking up my challenge.

Early in our tenure one day I overheard the other NELSON in the Senate speaking to a group, in a voice sufficiently loud that he knew I could overhear his statement. I will sum up the conversation in this spirit of levity. Senator BEN NELSON said to them, within my hearing: Oh, you must understand, I am the NELSON in the Senate who comes from the State with "the" football team.

I sauntered over and I said: That's right, BEN, you come from Nebraska, with the great Nebraska Cornhuskers, which I have great respect for, one of the finest football programs in the Nation. But, BEN, you must explain to your folks that I am the NELSON in the Senate who comes from the State with six professional football teams: the Dolphins, the Bucks, the Jaguars, the Gators, the Hurricanes, and the Seminoles.

I think that has now been amply demonstrated by the bowl games we just witnessed.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I inquire of the Presiding Officer, are we in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I will speak for a few minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today, with the announcement that the Federal Government is facing near-term budget deficits, as opposed to long-term budget deficits, for the next