

Hussein. He is at war with the United States. We were repeatedly told this."

Still, the political situation Saddam Hussein finds himself in today—in light of the example of decisive U.S. military action in Afghanistan—may not be as conducive to a strike at the U.S. as it was when Shahab says he first heard of the plan to blow up a U.S. warship. In recent months, Boyne notes, Iraq has engaged in a region-wide charm offensive to portray itself as a victim, and to build Arab and European support against any U.S. attack. Baghdad is even pursuing warmer ties with Kuwait (at the Arab League summit last week) and with Iran, in an attempt to gain mileage from Iran's anger at being listed as part of Washington's "axis of evil."

While the Bush administration focuses on Iraq's apparent pursuit of weapons of mass destruction—in the absence of UN weapons inspectors, who were kicked out in 1998—clues to Iraq's true role may lie in the credibility of the 29-year-old smuggler from Ahvaz.

Why is he talking now? "Afghanistan is finished, so now I feel free to speak," says Shahab, who was given the name Mohamed Jawad by accomplices in Afghanistan. Asked if he fears the wrath of senior members of the regime in Baghdad, who still hold power, Shahab replies: "I lost everything. For many years I worked with assassinations and killing—it doesn't make a difference to me."

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, yesterday major oil producers in Venezuela went on strike. Between Venezuela and Iraq, nearly 30 percent of our oil imports are at risk. And that is nearly 12 million barrels today.

We also learned that Saddam Hussein has indicated a payment to the families of the Palestinian suicide bombers of roughly \$25,000. Previously it was around \$10,000. That is a terrible incentive for terrorism. One has to wonder where he gets the cash. But you don't have to wonder very long because of the \$4-plus billion that the United States paid Saddam Hussein last year for oil.

The Senate needs to remember that Saddam is much more than just a member of the axis of evil. He is an energy partner of the United States.

We now understand that Iraq, Libya, and Iran have called for an OPEC oil embargo—an event that could cripple the world economy.

With each passing hour, the Mideast grows more unstable, and the future grows more uncertain. With each passing day, the United States grows more dependent on foreign sources of energy.

What does tomorrow hold? More chaos and more bloodshed. The United States has a role and an obligation to help lead the region to peace. I applaud the President for sending Secretary Powell to personally supervise these efforts. But now more than ever we should turn our attention to here at home. We need to look at the realities of how we are going to meet our energy needs with or without the Mideast.

Given the choice, will we choose to keep us dependent on foreign oil or will we choose solutions found here at home to lessen our dependence on imported oil, solutions within our borders free from the chaos and uncertainty in the Mideast?

I go back to 1995. If the Senate passed an amendment in the omnibus bill that would have allowed the opening of ANWR, where would we be today? We would be in production. We would be generating at least a million barrels more from domestic sources, eliminating at least a million barrels from imports. Unfortunately, our former President vetoed that bill.

The energy bill before us is one on which we spent nearly 3 weeks. There is some criticism for the delay, but I remind my colleagues that we are taking on an extremely difficult and divisive issue and dealing with it on the floor of the Senate as opposed to the committee process. Since the debate started on this issue, we have disposed of 49 amendments—21 offered by Republicans and 28 by Democrats. Working with my good friend, Senator BINGAMAN, I think we have moved in a responsible manner.

That total, I might add, does not include the two amendments dealing with judicial nominees, or several amendments that have been dealt with off the floor. We have dealt with extremely difficult amendments, including CAFE, and specifically whether Congress should decide on new vehicle standards or leave that decision to experts; whether Congress should impose a renewable portfolio standard on some electric producers or leave the decision on appropriate standards to the States; whether the Federal Government should continue the liability protection on nuclear powerplants—that is the Price-Anderson amendment—the issue of reliability, and how best to ensure reliability on our electricity grid; ethanol; and whether to create a reasonable fuel requirement.

But there are still significant issues left to decide. We need to close out the issues dealing with electricity. We need to reach some agreement on the climate change provision in the bill. Of course, we must address the tax provisions for renewable conservation, alternative fuel efficiency and production. We must decide how best to increase our domestic production of energy sources since there are no real production provisions in the Daschle substitute.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has used 10 minutes.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until the hour of 11:30 today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for another 5 minutes to finish my statement.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MOVING ON THE ENERGY BILL

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, although we have some significant issues left to decide, we need to close out electricity, climate change, tax provisions, and increasing our domestic production.

As I stated in my opening statement, because of the manner in which this legislation has come before the Senate, we have been forced to consider the measure without the benefit of the committee deliberation and action that ordinarily would accompany a bill of this nature. We have had difficult and divisive issues that should and could have been worked out in committee. It is debated here in this Chamber. It is not a question of laying blame on one or the other. The point is, we have to move on from where we are. This bill can only be resolved by the amendment process.

Recently, we have seen statements that the Republicans were stalling this bill because we had not offered an ANWR amendment. It is my intention to offer an ANWR amendment this week. I regret that some on the other side believe there have been delays. But I believe the Feinstein amendment is pending today. Of course, I anticipate that we will proceed and there will be an objection to moving off of it for any other reason. I have always believed the best way to move important legislation is to work through the less controversial issues first and then address the more difficult.

I remind my colleagues that it was the majority leader, not the Senator from Alaska, who decided to spend the entire first day of the debate on various amendment provisions. We saw those amendments which would not necessarily have been resolved with any significant advancing of the process. But, nevertheless, I will not belabor the manner in which this bill has moved forward. We have seen an extremely difficult process on both sides of the aisle in trying to balance a comprehensive and bipartisan bill that balances production, efficiencies, alternative fuels, and conservation.

The problems associated again with the movement of the bill probably need a little identification as we work through the process.

There were no committee reports or committee-approved texts for anyone to work from. The substitute that was brought about by the majority leader was kind of a moving target, and continued to be modified even after introduction. Even with that, we still deal with moving targets.

The renewable portfolio amendment offered by the manager on the other side changed so many times before introduction that the majority whip didn't really know—and I didn't know—whether we were talking about a standard of 8 or 10 percent or whatever. That does not form a basis for any kind of debate, and seriously complicates the ability of Members to draft amendments or know what they are voting on.

But I don't want to belabor this because what we are attempting to do is move this process along and bring up the other amendments. We are certainly not looking to extend the debate on the issue or filibuster this bill through unlimited amendments.

Currently, as I have indicated, there are roughly 150 known potential amendments remaining—roughly 100 on the Democratic side and 50 on the Republican side. Virtually all of them could and would have been dealt with within the committee process. But the staff for both the majority and the minority are working to eliminate this list.

I pledge my support to improve the legislation before us and get a bill to the President as soon as possible. I urge my colleagues to recognize the weight of this task before us as we push through the agenda and do what is right for the Nation.

I hope that as we start afresh after our Easter recess we can come together and recognize the reality that this country is in peril over energy, that the continued escalation of prices is going to hit the consumer and hit our recovery, the prospects associated with the curtailment of imports from Venezuela and Iraq, which constitute 30 percent of our oil imports, and the results of nearly 2 million barrels coming to a halt which we have depended on is going to severely affect our economic recovery.

It has been estimated for every million barrels of oil taken off the world market, crude oil prices rise roughly \$3 per barrel. Today's price is roughly \$27. Obviously, we are looking at somewhere between \$30 and \$33 if, indeed, this curtailment continues.

It is time to recognize that indeed we have some recourse. The recourse is to reduce our dependence, and one way to do that is obviously to look favorably upon the ANWR amendment.

I thank the Chair and my colleagues for the time. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

CHERRY BLOSSOM QUEEN ELIZABETH O'CONNOR

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, my colleague from Connecticut is joining me on the floor, and we are going to spend a couple minutes talking about two sources of State pride. I will very briefly mention, before I talk about the University of Connecticut women's basketball team, that last Friday night the U.S. Cherry Blossom Queen was crowned in Washington. We are very proud in my office to say Elizabeth O'Connor was chosen, by a random selection process, as the Cherry Blossom Queen of the United States.

She is a staff assistant in my office. She is a wonderful young woman who is very accomplished in many ways. A summa cum laude graduate of Notre Dame University from Farmington, CT, she went to Farmington High

School. She is the daughter of wonderful parents, Fred and Katherine O'Connor in Farmington, CT.

She will be going to Japan for a couple of weeks, meeting with the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the House, as the Cherry Blossom Queen of the United States.

You can understand the source of pride in our office and in Connecticut that Elizabeth has been chosen as Connecticut's society princess crowned the Cherry Blossom Queen. We are very proud of her. I know she will represent the State and the country very admirably. In the last few years we had another queen, Shannon Kula of my office, also chosen the Cherry Blossom Queen. People are beginning to wonder if Connecticut has some fix, a hold on the cherry blossom queen festival. Nothing such as that has occurred. This is good fortune and good luck for the State of Connecticut.

NCAA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONS

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today, along with my friend and colleague, Senator LIEBERMAN, to offer a Senate resolution commending the Connecticut women's basketball team. We have had a phenomenal season from start to finish, with the crowning victory at the Alamodome in Texas, defeating the University of Oklahoma just a few weeks ago. Their 82-to-70 victory in the national championship game on March 31 capped one of the most dominant seasons enjoyed by any sports team in recent memory.

The Huskie Women's Basketball Team finished the season undefeated, 39 and 0, becoming only the fourth women's NCAA basketball team in history to do so and one of a few teams that have had multiple national championships. There are only a handful that have had undefeated seasons and national championships.

The margin of victory of the UConn team over the season was astounding. A historical 35 points was the average margin of victory in the 39 victories they had during the regular season. In all my years—I know the Presiding Officer is a fan as well of sports and basketball—I never have seen anything quite like this. Each game was not a question of whether or not they would win but by how much. A phenomenal group of young women, a phenomenal coaching staff, they just did a terrific job during the entire season.

The accomplishments of this team go far beyond their dominance on the hard court. The Huskies have helped contribute to the greater cause of increasing the visibility of women athletes. Nearly 3.5 million people watched the final game on ESPN, which represented the largest audience for a college basketball game, men's or women's, in network history. Imagine, a few years ago, you would have been lucky to have a handful of people that might show up for a women's basketball game.

Not only did they have 3.5 million people watching on television, 30,000 people were packed into the Alamodome to watch the final game. Many people would have predicted that could never have happened only a few years ago. Why shouldn't it be so? Anyone who watched this remarkable team from Connecticut as well as the other top teams across the Nation—Tennessee, Duke, Oklahoma; there are a lot of great women's teams, the number growing each and every year—would certainly be impressed with the quality of the play they have brought to the game.

Theirs is a wonderful, pure style of basketball combining accurate shooting and flashy passing, as we have all seen, and sound all-around play. For the women's team, one of the strengths was the senior leadership. NCAA Player of the Year Sue Bird, along with her senior teammates Asjha Jones, Tamika Williams, and Swin Cash, have played together for 4 years—four remarkable women.

This last victory caps an incredible collegiate career for these four women, including an unbelievable 136-and-9 record and two national championships—rather phenomenal. Throughout the season, their familiarity with each other made it seem as though they could read each other's minds as they played on the court.

All of us in Connecticut are deeply proud. Last Saturday, there was a parade in Hartford, CT. Literally thousands of people on a bitterly cold day showed up to express their admiration and pride in these wonderful players and their coaches.

Coach Geno Auriemma is truly a special individual and deserves some very special recognition. He has led this team to victory after victory and does so with a great deal of style, emotion, and feeling for these young women. He arrived on the Storrs campus in 1985, at which time the Huskie team had experienced only one winning season. He quickly turned the program into one of the leading powerhouses in the Nation, and the pride of the people of Connecticut has been swelling ever since.

Coach Auriemma has compiled over 400 career wins at UConn including an unbelievable 272-and-17 record over the last 8 seasons. This represents a run of dominance possibly unmatched in the history of team sports competition. Under Coach Auriemma's leadership, the Huskies have won 3 national titles, 12 Big East regular season titles, and 11 Big East tournament titles. This year, Coach Auriemma was named National Coach of the Year for the fourth time in his career and the Big East Coach of the Year for the fifth time in his career.

Perhaps the most important example of Coach Auriemma's philosophy is the way he has led these women to be winners on the court and off as well. I know the Presiding Officer will be impressed by this statistic. Coach Auriemma has overseen a program that