

There is a lot of work going on regarding homeland security and different ways of moving forward. Senator LIEBERMAN and his staff and Senator THOMPSON and his staff and the two leaders have been working.

I also note that at 2 p.m. there is a gold medal ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda for General Shelton. I think the time would be well spent if we were not working directly on the bill so people would not have to worry about procedure.

I ask unanimous consent we go into morning business until 3 p.m., and at 3 p.m. Senator LIEBERMAN be recognized, and during that period of morning business the majority and minority have equal time of 10-minute limitations.

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

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### VIOLENCE IN THE MIDEAST

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, in the past 24 hours the world awakened again to another tragic incident causing great damage, death, harm, and destruction to the people of Israel. There are now news reports that, understandably, the Israelis are positioning their forces such that they, first and foremost, have to defend their sovereignty and the people of their nation, but that could again result in injury and death to others.

Regrettably, this has gone on for a very long time. Speaking for this one Senator, I feel it as an obligation on me, and I share that obligation with my colleagues, to address this subject and to put forth our own ideas as best we can fashion them. I am about to do that again. For the fourth time I have taken this floor and spoken about a concept I have had. I once again share it with my colleagues in hopes, if they have a better idea, if this administration has a better idea, then put it forward.

My thoughts were expressed on the floor on May 2 of this year in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, page 3812; June 21, CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, page 5891; July 24, CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, page 7299.

On August 2, roughly 6 weeks ago, I wrote the President of the United States. Copies were sent to his principal Cabinet officials having responsibilities in these areas. I am going to read that letter because it embraces my thoughts. Even though it was 6 weeks ago, I still steadfastly believe this is one approach to this tragic situation that deserves consideration.

I fully understand our President and his Cabinet are heavily engaged with

regard to critical considerations on Iraq and the United Nations. But I believe there is a connection between the ongoing crisis and the unsettled situation and the death and destruction in this tragic conflict between Israel and the Palestinian people.

Six weeks ago I wrote to the President. This is the first time, of course, I have made public this letter. I respect the President of the United States of whichever party. In these 24 years I have been privileged to be in the U.S. Senate, I have written on occasion, as each of us do, to our Presidents. But I try not to write the letter and within the same day or days release it. So this is the first time I have released this letter. It was 6 weeks ago, August 2 of this year:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT, the Nation recently celebrated our traditional 4th of July holiday—normally a time of joyful reflection about our history and patriotism. Thankfully, it was a peaceful day for America, but we entered that holiday period confronted with yet more warnings of possible terrorist attack. It is, indeed, prudent that our citizens be warned of such threats, even when specifics are lacking. However, if these warnings continue indefinitely, our people will begin to wonder what is the root cause of this hatred toward America and what is our government doing about it.

For the first time in the over 200 year history of our Republic we, under your leadership, are establishing a Department of Homeland Security and designating a new military command, U.S. Northern Command, to protect the fifty states. We've taken bold steps at home; others must join us in taking bold steps abroad.

As we all know, the scourge of terrorism in our 21st Century world is a complex, multifaceted problem. There is not a single cause, but many, including: disparate economic development around the world; lack of political and economic opportunity in many regions; the alarming spread of radical, fundamentalist religious dogma's—especially Islam—amongst those feeling disenfranchised from the mainstream; and, the parallel rise in ethnic conflict after decades of oppression by Communist and other tyrannical regimes.

In this environment of perceived hopelessness and despair for many of the world's youth, certain seemingly unsolvable events continue to fan the flames of anger and hatred that lead to irrational acts. This is manifested in the individual acts of terror we witness almost daily on the streets of Israel and in the recruitment of angry young men and women into radical terror organizations that encourage them to vent their anger in the most destructive, often suicidal, of ways.

Finding solutions for the conditions that have bred this hate and total disregard for peaceful solutions will be complex, but it must be systematically addressed. Clearly, you and key members of your Administration have shown, and continue to show leadership in this area.

But, we must ask the question, can more be done by others?

The prolonged Israeli-Palestinian conflict contributes, in part, to the unrest and anger in the Arab world. How much it contributes cannot be quantified, but it is a significant and growing factor. This conflict, often presented in a distorted and biased manner to citizens of Arab nations, must be confronted, if we are ever to meaningfully address the disaffection and dissatisfaction felt by the people of this region.

Each act of violence by either side in this unending conflict further erodes hope for a peaceful future for the people of Israel, the people of Palestine and others throughout the Middle East. In fact, each act of senseless violence in the Middle East further erodes hope that someday we can feel secure from terrorism here at home. All reasonable options to bring about an end to this violence and indiscriminate loss of life must be considered. We can never abandon hope. We must act in a way to renew hope in this land of faith, and we must continue to consider all options.

May I respectfully submit the following concept for your consideration concerning the use of NATO peacekeepers. My recommendation would be for you to request that the North Atlantic Council (NAC) formally consider a proposal to use NATO forces as peacekeepers. If the concept is acceptable to the NAC they could commence to draw up a plan for peacekeeping. Once consensus had been achieved within the NAC, the NAC would so advise the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, making it clear NATO would assist, only if the two sides establish a genuine cease fire, and both sides accept NATO's plan. Further, both sides must commit to cooperate in preventing further hostilities until negotiations have been successful to the point that NATO forces could be withdrawn and a substitute security plan has been put in place. Obviously, these steps are and will be very challenging, but they are achievable, especially in light of the bold, balanced vision you have articulated for a resolution of this conflict.

The basic thoughts in this letter have been stated by me previously in speeches on the floor of the Senate, and in my remarks to a recent gathering of NATO ambassadors on Capitol Hill, and in open hearings of the Senate Armed Services Committee with the Secretary of Defense present. Time is of the essence. I am concerned that recent events in the region, including the unfortunate Israeli attack that killed women and children as Israeli forces pursued Palestinian terrorists and the subsequent terrorist attack on Hebrew University, will further delay meaningful progress toward peace.

I strongly encourage you to explore this option with our NATO allies, and determine if they are willing to consider such a proposal. The time for discussion and consensus building is now. When the conditions for a cease fire and negotiations are right, we must be able to act quickly and decisively with a credible peacekeeping force.

I believe a NATO force would be credible for the reason that Europe is perceived as being more sympathetic to Palestinian views and the U.S. as more sympathetic to Israeli views. NATO can bond these viewpoints to act as one with peace as its unifying goal, and dispel these perceived biases. NATO troops are trained and "ready to roll" on short notice. NATO is an established coalition of nations with a proven record of successful peacekeeping in the Balkans. Clearly, there are risks, but NATO peacekeepers can—with the cooperation of Israel and the Palestinian people—bring stability to this troubled region; stability that will allow for meaningful negotiations that have a chance to end the violence.

This is not a conclusion that I have reached lightly. Some of my colleagues in the Senate, as well as noted journalists and others, have discussed with me the broad issues associated with this proposal. Mine has been one of the many voices calling for well-defined principles and restraint in the employment of U.S. forces around the world. I fully recognize the risks to U.S. forces and our alliance partners. I strongly feel this is one of those unique circumstances that demand every resource and idea we can bring

to bear. If the opportunity arises, we must be prepared to give peace and hope a chance.

I respectfully submit these thoughts as you forge ahead and lead the world's efforts to find a path to peace for this important region of our global community, and in so doing, enhance the security of our people here at home. It is my fervent hope that by the time we pause to celebrate our nation's next birthday, the fledgling ideas we are collectively considering today will have blossomed into substantial progress toward freedom from the senseless violence we are witnessing today.

With kind regards, I am respectfully.—John Warner.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 14, 2002]

NEVER MIND, MR. SHARON

Most of three months has passed since President Bush laid out his vision for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and still there has been next to no follow-up by his administration. No. Cabinet-level officials have visited the region since the president's speech; despite pleas from the Arab leaders Mr. Bush asked for support, no details have been offered on how to move from the present situation to Mr. Bush's vision of side-by-side Israeli and Palestinian states. On the contrary: Despite Mr. Bush's announcement of an international effort to reconstruct Palestinian security forces, the CIA has taken only token steps to train new officers; despite the president's clarion call for Palestinian democracy, the administration has quietly joined Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in opposing the holding of Palestinian national elections anytime in the near future. In effect, what the president cast on June 24 as a major initiative for Middle East peace has all but vanished; in its place is a suddenly all-consuming campaign against Iraq that could soon lead to a new Middle East war. Vice President Cheney, among others, is arguing that overturning the regime of Saddam Hussein will make an Israeli-Palestinian settlement easier, but even if that is true, what is not clear is how a conflict that has cost more than 2,000 lives in the past two years, and is a primary source of Muslim grievance against the United States, can be contained between now and then.

In the now familiar absence of Bush administration engagement, halting progress has been made by the parties on the ground. There have been no major Palestinian suicide attacks against Israelis in six weeks, despite several attempts; both the Israeli army and the Palestinian administration claim credit, and both probably had something to do with it. Attempts by Palestinian political and military leaders to change the direction of their self-destructive uprising against Israel, and to force Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to yield most of his power, continue in spite of Mr. Arafat's strong resistance; this week the legislative body of the Palestinian Authority delivered an unprecedented rebuff, forcing the resignation of Mr. Arafat's cabinet. The more moderate Labor Party ministers in Mr. Sharon's cabinet have been trying to negotiate incremental security agreements with the Palestinians, and there are signs of revival in the long-moribund Israeli peace camp.

But Israeli troops occupy six major West Bank towns and significant parts of the Gaza Strip, imposing curfews and other restric-

tions on movement that aid agencies say are breeding a mounting humanitarian crisis. Israeli forces killed more than a dozen innocent Palestinian civilians in the past two weeks, including several children; a hasty official investigation cleared the soldiers of any wrongdoing. Israeli settlement-building in the territories continues; Mr. Sharon refuses to rein it in, just as he rejects any discussion of Palestinian statehood or any negotiations—even with a post-Arafat leadership—about a permanent peace. For his part, Mr. Bush clearly remains unwilling to do or say anything that would cross Mr. Sharon. That reluctance largely explains his administration's failure to act on his broad promises of last June; in the coming months, it could also prove a serious impediment to building a coalition against Iraq.

Mr. WARNER. I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. STABENOW). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### THE BUDGET AND THE ECONOMY

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, appropriately, there has been a great deal of discussion over the past week about the fiscal status of the country, the condition of our budget, and our national economy. I would like to take a few minutes to respond to some of the false claims that have been made by the Bush administration and by some Members of the Senate over the last 10 days.

First, I would like to respond to some of the remarks made by the President when he was at a fundraiser in Iowa on Monday. The President said the following there. He said:

[W]e have a budget that focuses on setting priorities and focuses on getting us back to a balanced budget. But there has been no budget out of the United States Senate. They haven't passed a budget. They have no plan to balance the budget. . . . It's of concern, because if you have no budget, it means there's no discipline. And if there's no discipline, it's likely that the Senate will overspend.

If there was ever a case of someone accusing another of their own shortcomings, this is it. My grandmother once told me: Sometimes what people say about others reveals more about themselves than it does of those who they seek to characterize.

This is that circumstance. These comments by the President, I find deeply disturbing. It is unfortunate that the President continues to deny any responsibility for the Nation's dive back into deficits and for increasing debt.

Instead, he desperately tries to blame others for the deficits that his own policies have created.

Let's look at the President's first claim, that he and the House Republicans have a plan that "focuses on getting us back to a balanced budget." No, they do not. That is not true. The President must know it is not true. They have no plan that gets us back into balance. In fact, the plan they have drives us deep into the deficit swamp. That is the truth.

You will recall 1 year ago, the President told us, with great confidence, that we could expect \$5.6 trillion of surpluses over the next decade. We warned, at the time, that that was a risky gamble, that one could not count on a 10-year forecast, that there was enormous risk associated with it.

The President insisted not only that there was going to be \$5.6 trillion of surpluses over the next decade, but he and his administration told us privately that there is probably going to be much more money than that.

We said: No, we think it is highly unlikely that we will see that level of surplus.

And just 1 year later, what we find is, if the President's spending and tax policies over the next decade are adopted, instead of \$5.6 trillion of surpluses, we will see \$400 billion of deficits. The President says it is the fault of the Democrats, that they are spending the money.

Madam President, this will happen without a dime of spending by Democrats. These numbers only include the President's own proposals for spending and additional tax cuts. They lead us from a circumstance of last year being told we had nearly \$6 trillion of surpluses to one in which we now see \$400 billion of deficits, if his policies are adopted.

In many ways, this is the best case scenario because it does not take into account that the President will be using trillions of dollars of Social Security money on top of this.

This chart shows—I will put it in the RECORD; I know it is too small to read from afar—but one can see the red. The red are the deficits. If you don't count Social Security money, if you don't take Social Security money, as the President proposes, and use it for other things, we see red ink throughout the entire rest of the decade. In fact, over \$2.7 trillion of money is being taken from Social Security to pay for other things under the President's budget plan. That is a recipe for fiscal disaster. And it is the President's plan, make no mistake about it.

I ask unanimous consent the chart I just referred to be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the chart was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows: