

I have been asked by reporters: Was this a calculated move?

I said: No; you should have been there and just seen the reaction.

I remember the junior Senator from California, the senior Senator from New York, and some others of us urged him to go to the floor and to just speak his mind. He was saying to others: Maybe I ought to reflect on it. No, you should speak what you think.

I think it is clear, and I have been talking with people in my State, that the President has stepped over the line with these remarks. This weekend, I was asked by many people way to the left of me: Isn't the President, when he wants to go into Iraq, using politics?

I said: No, I don't think so. I think he has been wanting to go into Iraq from the very beginning.

Then for him to accuse Democrats of using politics, in my judgment—and I wonder what the Senator from California thinks because she has spoken in a heartfelt, compassionate way—I think the American people are fundamentally fair, and ugly tactics like that will backfire on their own, but I also believe it has to be pointed out because war is serious stuff and we need unity. We do not need political games.

Senator INOUE said it best. I just ask the Senator if she is finding the same thing in her State as mine; that people are not sure, they want some questions asked before we go into war, and people do not like one party accusing the other of not being patriotic or being less concerned about national security simply because they ask questions. I wonder what the Senator's opinion is.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator from California yield for a parliamentary request?

Mrs. BOXER. I certainly will.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are on H.R. 5005; is that right?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate go off the homeland security bill and proceed to a period for morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for a period not to exceed 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. My understanding is the Senator from California wishes to speak for how long?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Twenty minutes.

Mr. REID. The Senator from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, for 20 minutes following the statement of the Senator from California, Mrs. BOXER.

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

HOMELAND SECURITY

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, let me respond to my friend from New York. The phone calls, letters, and e-mails we

have been getting have been one-sided against an open, blank-check resolution, as they are phrasing it, as was sent over. They are very much against what the President sent over.

More importantly are my conversations with my constituents. They clearly are very pleased that Senator FEINSTEIN has made remarks regarding Iraq, and I have spoken out. I have received calls now because I raised a number of questions in the Foreign Relations Committee regarding working with our allies, working through the U.N., asking: Is there a path to peace here?

What I pointed out is in recent years, I have voted for two resolutions to go to war: One was to stop the genocide by Milosevic, that was with a Democratic President, and one with current President Bush to respond to the brutal, inhumane terrorist attack on 9/11 for which every single Democrat in this particular body voted.

To me, it is not a question of will I ever vote for such action. It is a question of what is the best way to proceed. My constituents want to hear what I am thinking. I have been in Congress for 20 years. They do not want to see debates where one party is saying to another: You do not care about the American people. My friend is so correct. They look to us to engage in a rational debate, not to have one-line zingers as the President put out. This is not what they want.

Then Ari Fleischer, who is the press secretary for the President, said this today:

It's time for everyone to work well together to protect our national security.

That was his remark after he was questioned about the President's statement.

That is the point that Senator DASCHLE was making, but not as rhetoric, as fact. There is an expression, I believe it was John Adams said: Facts are stubborn things. The facts are this President said very clearly: The Democrat-controlled Senate "is not interested in the security of the American people." My people at home are appalled at that.

Mr. CORZINE. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mrs. BOXER. Yes, I will continue to yield to both my colleagues.

Mr. CORZINE. I want to reinforce what the Senator from New York said. By the way, this statement about not being interested in the security of the American people was made in Trenton, NJ, on Monday at a political rally. It is hard for me to understand what special interests are being reflected in the President's comments and its repeated nature.

I wonder if the junior Senator from California actually knew this was made in Trenton, NJ, at a political rally for the competitor to our side of the aisle? Is that not political in and of itself?

Mrs. BOXER. I say to my friend, I learned of this quote reading the front page today of the Washington Post,

and I am going to read what it says. It says four times in the past 2 days Bush has suggested that Democrats do not care about national security, saying on Monday that the Democratic-controlled Senate is "not interested in the security of the American people."

His remarks, intensifying the theme he introduced last month, were quickly seconded and disseminated by Republican House majority whip TOM DELAY of Texas.

I was unaware of this, although it is interesting to me, because that particular race, of course, in New Jersey, which is pivotal to the future of this Senate, and adds to the political nature of this comment.

Mr. SCHUMER. Will the junior Senator from California continue to yield?

Mrs. BOXER. Yes.

Mr. SCHUMER. I believe my friend was here when I was back in 1991. There was a long debate. I think it was a debate on the merits.

Mrs. BOXER. Yes.

Mr. SCHUMER. Both sides debated strongly in a heartfelt way. The Nation voted to go to war. Whatever side you were on, it seemed to me by having the debate, by keeping the invective aside—I do not remember the previous President George Bush ever using lines like that. After the debate, the vote was close, I believe, in both bodies. It certainly was in the House. The American people were more unified. There was a feeling that everyone had their point of view, that everything was explored.

I would say to my friend from California, at every townhall meeting about Iraq, and I have had a bunch of them around the State, they say you must know something we do not know. There must be some secret.

I have attended a few of the classified briefings and obviously would not want to disclose what is in there, but I say to them, no, as to the basic broad facts, not any kind of detail that would involve security, but the basic broad facts are known to every American because they are in the newspapers. There are no hidden, deep, dark secrets, at least that I am aware of. Maybe there are that we do not know about. But in a democracy, you cannot go to war this way. You cannot say if you are a leader of the country, I know something you do not know, when you are sending the sons and daughters of America to be put in harm's way.

I do not know how I would come out if we had to vote today, but whether I would end up voting yes or no—and I do not know what the resolution would look like—I sure would feel bad if we did not have a debate, if we did not have a discussion, if a whole variety of questions were not asked.

I would like to hear my friend's opinions on this. This is the most awesome, humbling decision that a Member of the Senate or the other body can make, because you are putting the beautiful young people of America in harm's way. You have to be careful.

I am not a pacifist. I can think of a whole number of wars in our country's history where I would have enlisted. I would have been lined up the next day.

I would not say that first strikes should always be ruled out, but I sure want to ask some questions and I sure want to know some answers. This idea of trying to impugn the patriotism, in the interest of helping the American people, of anyone who wants to ask questions, I find, well, too low for words.

I ask the junior Senator from California if she has the same feeling. I come from New York. I know what terrorism does. I knew people who were lost. I put this flag on September 12, and I have worn it every day since then in memory of those who were lost. God willing, I am going to wear it every day for the rest of my life.

I know what terrorism is all about. Nobody wants to beat back terrorism more than I do, but I want to make sure we do it and we do it right. I want to make sure if we go to war in Iraq we are not going to ignore or take resources away from, for example, fighting al-Qaida or other terrorist groups. Perhaps we can do both, but I have not had a chance yet to get all the answers about that. I wonder what the Senator thinks.

Mrs. BOXER. I say to my friend, he is absolutely right.

I want to say for the benefit of my senior Senator for California, I will be talking another 5 minutes and then I will yield.

I want to underscore that what the Senator says is so right. After that debate that took place on the first gulf war, about 80 percent of the American people said they were so proud. Clearly, they may not have agreed with my position, your position, or any other Senator on the other side of the debate, but they saw debate free and open, respectful debate, among colleagues, asking questions, posing ideas, other solutions, other paths to resolve the issue.

In some cases, there was strong support for the President. They realized then that we are a representative democracy. They were calm.

When I went home this past weekend, I found out the people in my State are not calm. They are very agitated, and it is because they are worried that debate is being stifled. They are worried that a resolution is—

Mr. MILLER. The Senator has used her 10 minutes.

Mrs. BOXER. When Senator REID made the request, he did not apply the 10 minutes to this speaker, but I ask unanimous consent to continue for 5 additional minutes before Senator FEINSTEIN proceeds.

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

Mrs. BOXER. The people at home are agitated, I say to my friend, because they expect to see this respect go both ways between the parties and even, frankly, within the parties. We have Republicans who are asking questions

and others who are not. We have Democrats who are ready to vote today for the Bush resolution and others, such as myself, who frankly could not because I believe it is a blank check.

I thank my friend for his engagement in this colloquy. Let me conclude in this way: I have thought to myself, why is this happening? I believe there is a political decision that has been made to keep this country focused on the foreign policy questions and not focused on the everyday kitchen table issues, the domestic issues that need to be addressed. I am going to go to some charts very quickly.

We have seen long-term unemployment more than doubling since this administration came in. We have seen the worst performance of the stock market since Hoover. That means pensions are going down the tubes, as well as 401(k)s, and people's hopes and dreams for their retirement. We have seen an average rate change in the real gross domestic product, which is the worst in generations. It is the worst of all Presidents from Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, the first George Bush, and President Clinton. It is the worst growth rate. That is what we have seen.

In summing up the economic record, we have seen record job losses, weak economic growth, declining business investment, falling stock market, shrinking retirement accounts, eroding consumer confidence, rising health care costs, escalating foreclosures, vanishing surpluses, higher interest rates on the horizon, raiding Social Security, record executive pay and a stagnating minimum wage.

So I believe that a decision was made to deal with a foreign policy issue at the exclusion of what is happening on the ground with our families. Mr. President, that is distressing. We need to do both.

We need to rise to the foreign policy challenges we face. On the war against terrorism, we have a long way to go. In Afghanistan, in Pakistan, right here, with the cells that exist in our country, we have a long way to go. We need to step to the plate on that fight. We need to step to the plate on the Iraq challenge and handle it correctly with our allies, with a plan that will lead us perhaps to a peaceful end without having to shed blood. Maybe there is a chance. We should at least explore it. We have to step to the plate on the economic issues and we need to do that across party lines. We have to do it with the Republicans, with the Independents, with the Democrats—together.

One course we do not want is for one party to say about the other: They don't care about the security of the American people. If one party does that, as the Republicans did today, as the President did, as reported today, we will lose all these other battles. We will have a divided country. We will not be able to work together in good will.

My leader, TOM DASCHLE, the leader of the Senate, was right to say what he said, was right to express himself in the way he did. I hope the answer will be that in the future we will join hands as Americans and, even where we might disagree on a strategy, on an amendment, on a bill, work together as Americans. That is when the people are most proud of us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is recognized for 20 minutes.

IRAQ

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I thank my friend and colleague, Senator BOXER, for her excellent remarks, and those Senators from New Jersey and New York who joined her. She has made a very impassioned message. It is a correct message. I hope people listen.

I also am deeply saddened by recent comments made by the President and Vice President which imply that Democrats are not protective of our Nation's security. Nothing is further from the truth.

There is no shortage of courage and bravery and patriotism on this side of the aisle. We, too, have our heroes who prove that: Senator MAX CLELAND, Senator DANIEL INOUE, former Senator Bob Kerrey, and Senator JOHN KERRY, people who fought with bravery and distinction in major conflicts this Nation has had.

Even to imply the Democrats are not interested in the security of the American people is not only wrong, but in the present pre-election period I believe it is also base.

Last night, it was reported the Vice President went so far as to state that American security would be enhanced if a certain GOP candidate was elected to the House of Representatives. This very statement, carried by major newspapers, jaundiced any fair discussion in this pre-election period.

One might ask why? The reason is both the President and the Vice President have an extraordinary bully pulpit with a very long reach. It makes up about 95 percent of everything that reaches the American public; the remaining 5 percent is scattered among whoever is able to receive it.

If this debate is politicized in the heat of an election and the decision is made for the wrong reasons—out of fear; if we do not carry out the public trust that is invested in us and make the decision for the right reasons, then we betray our trust. And no election is worth doing that.

I share the concern of the majority leader, and I hope it is not too late to end this politicization. But there is only one way. Shortly, we in Congress will begin debate on whether to authorize the President the authority to use force against Iraq. It is, in effect, a declaration of war. The President has sent a draft resolution. He made his case before the United Nations. Today he