

forgotten war in Afghanistan—the largely forgotten war in Afghanistan—continues to grind on and on and on more than a year and a half after the United States roused the Taliban from power and obliterated al Qaeda's terrorist training camps. Nearly 10,000 American troops remain in Afghanistan, with no end—no end—to their mission in sight—and no clear mission to accomplish—hunting the remnants of the Taliban and al-Qaida organizations. In Iraq, Saddam Hussein's sons have been killed, and one can only hope that we are closing in on Saddam Hussein himself, but in the wider war on terrorism, Osama bin Laden remains at large, and his organization continues to spread its venom throughout the Middle East and perhaps the world.

The alert issued earlier this week by the Homeland Security Department is only the latest reminder that the al-Qaida terrorist network remains a potent threat to America and its allies. The warning included specific details—such as the fact that targets might include the East Coast of the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, or Australia and it raised the possibility that at least one of the planned hijackings or bombings could be executed before the end of the summer.

In the face of such a frightening specter, it is somewhat unsettling that on the subject of terrorism, the President is talking tough to Iran and Syria, but he seldom mentions Osama bin Laden anymore.

Is this another example of the President's efforts to change his message to divert the attention of the American people, the people who are watching through those electronic eyes above the Chair's desk? The imminent and direct threat of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction was used to hoodwink the public into accepting the rush to war, but now that no weapons have been found, the President barely mentions them anymore. Instead, he is now talking about how regime change in Iraq was really the catalyst required to stabilize the Middle East. New day, new message.

At the center of America's imperiled relations with its friends and foes alike is the Bush doctrine of preemption, which was first articulated in the September 2002 National Security Strategy. This unprecedented declaration that the United States has the right to launch preemptive military attacks against hostile nations in the absence of direct provocation sent shockwaves throughout the international community.

The doctrine of preemption was the justification for attacking Iraq without provocation, but the ramifications of the policy go far beyond that nation. All so-called "rogue regimes" were put on notice that the United States was prepared to act to deter the development of weapons of mass destruction that could be used against America.

Suddenly, the elite club of nations that formed the President's "axis of

evil" found itself caught in the cross hairs of the U.S. military. And just as quickly, the hollowness of the doctrine was exposed. Iraq could be attacked at will because it did not have nuclear capability. North Korea called for restraint because it plausibly did have nuclear capability. Iran was a question mark. Predictably, both North Korea and Iran, seeing the writing on the wall, began to scramble to accelerate their nuclear programs. In retrospect, the doctrine of preemption is beginning to look more and more like a doctrine of provocation.

Against this background, the storm clouds of international instability are massing. America's military forces are stretched thin in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our military leadership is absorbed with Iraq. Our military resources, both financial and personnel, are strained to the breaking point. With the exception of Britain, our allies are reluctant to commit significant resources or manpower to an operation in Iraq in which the United States has a stranglehold on authority and decision-making. The executive branch is preoccupied with the occupation of Iraq and seems paralyzed when it comes to meaningful action to deal with North Korea or Iran or Liberia. Afghanistan and the global war on terror have seemingly been relegated to the status of afterthoughts. America's foreign policy appears to be adrift in an increasingly tumultuous sea of international turmoil. Meanwhile, the national terror threat continues to hover uneasily in the "elevated range" amid new warnings of terrorist attacks being plotted against commercial aircraft.

In this moment of great potential peril, the President is preparing to retire for a month to his ranch in Texas. The question needs to be asked: Who's minding the White House?

In a short time, the Senate will recess for the month of August. I do not think we should go very far. I hope that the international situation will remain stable, and that no new crises will erupt. But I do not pretend to be sanguine. I do not pretend to assume that all will be well.

A rare combination of volatile and dangerous international events are poised to converge in the coming months. In large part, it is a storm of this administration's own making, fueled by the fear, confusion, and instability caused by the unprecedented and ill-advised doctrine of preemption. I only hope that the President and his advisers can summon the skill, the wit, and the leadership to engage and attempt to tame the elements of international turmoil before it is too late and we are swept up into the vortex of the storm.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Members, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

SEPTEMBER IN THE SENATE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, shortly I will make a statement addressing some of the accomplishments we have been able to achieve over the last several weeks—indeed, over the last 6 or 7 months—and, at the same time, a note to my colleagues about the future. Most are thinking about getting on airplanes and going home or around the world now or this afternoon. It is important over the August recess, from the Senate standpoint and staff standpoint, that people begin working in preparation for our return in early September.

I mentioned early this morning, most of September will be spent on the appropriations bills. We have been very successful in addressing four of those appropriations bills to date; we have nine to address in the next several weeks. After discussion with the Appropriations Committee and the leadership in the Senate and many colleagues, the first appropriations bill in September will be the Labor, HHS, and Education appropriations bill. We will start that right off the bat coming back from this recess. Under the leadership of Chairman SPECTER, we have made huge progress in this regard.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 2660

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, at this juncture, I ask unanimous consent that at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, September 2, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 197, H.R. 2660, the Labor, HHS, and Education appropriations bill.

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

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I will yield to my distinguished colleague who will be managing this very important piece of legislation, someone who has worked very aggressively, very diligently in this regard and who I am confident will lead the Senate in addressing these important issues in a timely, efficient, and expeditious way upon our return.

I yield a few minutes to Chairman SPECTER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished majority leader for his generous comments. I thank him, further, for listing the appropriations bill for Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education immediately on our return on September 2.

I have conferred with the ranking member of the Democrats, Senator HARKIN, about our plan for managing the bill, and have conferred beyond that with Senator BYRD, the ranking

member of the full committee, and with many of the Democrats who will be expected to offer amendments.

It is a very complex bill governing the Departments of Health and Human Services and Education and Labor, and traditionally it brings a great many amendments. That is to be expected. It is my thought that we can identify the amendments at an early stage, that we can work out time agreements, and that we can vote on the amendments.

I have already talked to some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle about doing some of that work in August, where we will be identifying amendments. We have an excellent staff on both sides of the aisle already working. It is our expectation, beyond our hope, to have a very prompt consideration of the bill and to get it completed at an early date. I don't want to say any timeline because this body is too unpredictable, even with planning and with management, but it is our hope to get short time agreements and, with the consent of the leadership, to have the votes stacked. If there are arguments, to go over and make use of the evening time and proceed to get the bill completed.

There is one very strong incentive on all sides for completing the bill and that is that we have \$3 billion more if we have a bill than if we have a continuing resolution. We do not have too much money to start with, and very important items on health, education, and worker safety, et cetera.

So we intend to proceed on that basis. I appreciate the opportunity to address my colleagues. As the majority leader has said, people are already on planes en route, some worldwide. I have my plans very well set. I am on a train in 25 minutes. August is to be spent by this Senator traveling his State.

There is rumor that I have an election coming up in 2004, both a primary and a general election. I have a lot of work to do and will be attending to it. When we return at the start of September—to the Senate business, Senator HARKIN and I hope to set the pace to try to get these appropriations bills done, to cooperate with the majority leader. If there is to be a completion by September 30, the end of the fiscal year, this is the giant, once the Department of Defense appropriations bill has been finished.

So we will be hard at work, trying to get through the bill and have the Senate work its will and get it completed in the public interest.

I, again, thank the majority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished chairman. I have the utmost confidence we will be able to get on this bill as soon as we get back and that, under his leadership, along with that of Senator HARKIN, we will be able to very effectively and efficiently address the issues before us.

Clearly, we seek early, rather than later, completion. One of the advan-

tages of even having this colloquy now and us having the statement together is that people know what we are coming to. They have plenty of time to look at the appropriations and develop what comments they have to make and allow time for preparation of amendments. With that, we should be able to come back and hit the ground running.

Mr. SPECTER. If I might make one addenda, Mr. President, and that is the option of third reading if people do not have amendments to offer. One of the banes of the Senate procedure is the quorum call, those two lights up there when nothing is happening on the floor.

I have long been an advocate that, if amendments are not offered, we ought to go to third reading. When people have more than a month to prepare, I think that is a fair position to take. When I last managed this bill in June of the year 2000, we finished the bill on the Senate floor on June 28, which tied a record going back to 1974.

We cannot do that; we are already past June 28. But I think we can get this bill done. But let the record show: Let the buyers beware. Let Senators be on notice that this manager intends to push for third reading if we have quorum calls up there. People ought to bring their amendments to the floor and we will debate them and vote on them and work the will of the Senate and work through promptly.

Again, I thank the majority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

DOING THE NATION'S BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, the past 4 weeks have been extraordinarily productive. I thank my colleagues for their participation, for their cooperation, and for their patience to make that possible. I thank them for accepting some deadlines that we put forward, accepting the overall strategy, just as we just heard, of setting a goal far in advance so people have the opportunity to prepare and to think so we can most efficiently use the time for debate and amendment on the floor of the Senate.

We have passed major legislation, of which we should all be proud. We should share that with our constituents, as we go back to our States, as we travel around the country to seek input and listen but also to say that we are doing the Nation's business.

Our leadership has developed a straightforward mission. The mission is crystal clear. It is to move America forward. We are doing so in a manner with values such as civility and trust. We do it in a way that is relationship centered, meaning that we are working together to get the very best out of our individual Members, in terms of thoughts and ideas. We do it in a manner that is solution oriented, that is solutions to the problems that we identify, not just rhetoric and not just talk about the problems.

I think we witnessed that yesterday, in a long day that began at 9 o'clock or 9:30 in the morning but continued until late at night, with the ultimate passage of an Energy bill, of which passage, early in the morning, people said: No way.

All the media questions, people coming up were saying it is going to take another week or 2 weeks or 3 weeks on this Energy bill. Are you going to stay in on Saturday? Are you going to come back and spend all of September?

Yet after initial discussion and proposals, both caucuses worked together and worked within themselves and we came together to pass an Energy bill that will, indeed, move America forward. We did it against what many people would say are the odds. We did it in a very closely divided Senate. But it shows that even in that environment, of a closely divided Senate, if we keep our eye on a specific goal, we can move America forward.

We have set specific goals. As you just heard, we laid out what we are going to be doing next far enough in advance for people to prepare.

Then we act. Each side has certain strategies, and then we reach that goal to give a solution to the American people. That is what Americans expect. When we talk to our constituents, that is what they say they want. That is why they send us to the Senate. They want to be sure we step up to the plate on growth and jobs.

We must be a key partner with the administration in the war on terror. We must stand up and act on life and support our values here at home and, indeed, around the world. We have much to do in the realm of health. We have made progress, but we have much more to do. Our tort system is badly in need of reform.

Of course, during all of this, our utmost responsibility is to govern—to govern responsibly, in a responsive way.

Before we leave for our recess today, reflecting over the last 4 weeks we have been in session, I therefore jump back to before the Fourth of July recess. Before the Fourth of July recess, it was at that point that I informed our colleagues we would be doing the Energy bill in this final week in July, and we did. I said at that time we would do everything possible to finish the Energy bill this week, and we did. As late as yesterday morning, there was doubt. Early in the morning, people said there was no way it could be done. We got it done by cooperation—again, on both sides of the aisle—by determination, and by going back to one of those values I keep talking about which we are expressing in this Congress—civility. We were successful. We got it done. America will benefit. Americans will benefit.

We have a national comprehensive energy policy coming out of this body. Yes, it will be modified. Yes, in part, it will be rewritten over the coming weeks. But with the President laying