

electricity is up, and they have said: No. So that is Thursday night, Friday, Friday night, Saturday, Saturday night, Sunday, Sunday night, and now Monday. I know the local disaster relief and utility repair persons are working very hard, and we respect all of their work a great deal.

Again, it is time for everybody to pull together as we address the powerful effects and potential devastation from this hurricane. So our thoughts and prayers are with everybody. Everybody should gather together and we will pull through this as well as we might.

IRAQ

Mr. FRIST. The second subject I want to comment on is the continual news that we have with regard to what is going on in Baghdad. Today we received news that a suicide bomber detonated himself at the entrance of the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad. The bomber injured 19 people, including 2 Iraqi United Nations workers.

This terrorist action follows an assassination attempt over the weekend on Aquila al-Hashimi, one of the three women who is serving on the Iraqi governing council. I understand through reports that Ms. Al-Hashimi is recovering from the attempt on her life. Most of my colleagues know she is a leading candidate to become Iraq's future United Nations ambassador.

These outrageous attacks demonstrate the level of cowardice and depravity that indeed is almost beyond words, that the enemy would stalk and attack a woman who is serving her people and murder Iraqi civilians attempting to build a representative democracy or, as we just saw, one guardsman inspecting a car. That they would do these things shows us once again the ugly face of our enemy.

Some in this body have claimed there is no connection between Saddam and al-Qaida. This is false. As the President said last week, there is no question Saddam Hussein had al-Qaida ties. We know Saddam permitted the operation of a terrorist training camp on Iraqi soil. We know the Iraqi intelligence chief, Faruk Hijazi, met with bin Laden and his associates. And we know Abdul Rahman Yasin, a suspect in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, was harbored in Iraq. We are now learning from documents found in Tikrit that he may have even received payments and a home from the Iraqi Government.

Thus, there is no doubt—there is no doubt—that Saddam was in league with terrorists. Saddam himself was the embodiment of terror.

There can also be no doubt that Saddam is finished; that Iraq, the American people, and the civilized world are better off without him and without his terror-sponsoring regime.

It is my expectation the Senate will turn to consideration of the President's emergency request for Iraq and Af-

ghanistan on the floor next week. It is my hope that we will have good debate, both in committees over the course of this week and, indeed, on the Senate floor, and complete action on this legislation before the Senate recesses on October 3.

I know Senators on both sides of the aisle have a lot of questions—many questions. The post-war situation in Iraq has required sacrifice. We see it every day—from the families who are separated by service, the families who are our constituents and friends to whom we talk on a daily basis and, most of all, those who have lost loved ones in the ongoing fighting.

The President has laid out a plan and a vision to move us forward. By actively participating in this debate we can fulfill that vision and support our service men and women who have already sacrificed so much. We will also send a message to friend and foe around the world that America will stand with the Iraqi people; that America will defeat the enemies of peace and democracy. It is that message that I believe, through our committee hearings this week, through our discussions and through the debate on the Senate floor, will ring most loudly—that America will stand with the Iraqi people and America will defeat the enemies of peace and democracy.

In preparation for next week's debate, Senate committees—this week, in fact, beginning right now at 2—will begin holding a whole series of hearings to examine and discuss the President's request. The Senate Appropriations Committee will be holding two hearings, the Foreign Relations Committee will be holding three hearings, and the Armed Services Committee will be holding one hearing. Each will examine closely the President's proposal, and I am confident that with the appropriate discussion and with that scrutiny it will win overwhelming support in the Senate.

The world now has before it a window to help the Iraqi people reclaim their future as a free people. The foundation of a democratic and stable Iraq will only be found in economic opportunity and liberty. It is this foundation that best defines—and this will play out as we talk over the course of this week—this is a foundation of economic opportunity coupled with security that President Bush's proposal best provides.

With our \$20 billion investment, we will not reconstruct the economy of Iraq, as a lot of people say or which they envision. That is not what the \$20 billion will be doing. That can only be done by the Iraqi people themselves. The Iraqi economy can only be reconstructed by the Iraqi people. It can only be done by their own resourcefulness, by their own commitment, by their own entrepreneurship, and by their own imagination. Yes, Iraqis now have the freedom to become entrepreneurs, to be creative, and to have that creativity realized and translated

through democratic principles into economic opportunity. What we must do is create a stable environment in which that newfound freedom will be allowed to flourish.

From our investment will flow other investments from other nations willing to help the Iraqi people and from the developing resources of the Iraqi people themselves. Our investment, at least as I see it, is not an obligation: it is a choice. It is a choice that the United States supports the Iraqi people. It is a choice that we believe democracy can and will flourish among them. And it is a choice that the American people are made more secure by Iraq having a free and democratic state.

The swift victory of our troops this spring makes us forget in some ways the threat Saddam once posed. We lived with the threat and instability emanating from Iraq for over two decades. Twice Saddam Hussein was on the verge of developing nuclear weapons—once stopped by the courageous airstrike by Israel and once stopped by the United States coalition in the 1991 gulf war. Twice Saddam Hussein invaded his neighbors to expand his reign of terror—once into Iran and once into Kuwait. Twice we sent the United States military to confront Saddam Hussein—once expelling him from Kuwait and once expelling him from Baghdad. Saddam Hussein played host to international terrorists to the very last day of his reign.

Some will argue that we cannot afford to finish the job in Iraq. We can't afford not to. We have already invested billions of dollars, through two wars and through two decades, in trying to end this persistent threat to the stability of the Middle East and to the safety of the United States and its allies.

We have it now within our power to ensure once and for all that there will be no third attempt to build yet another nuclear weapon. We have it within our power to ensure that there is not a third gulf war for yet another generation of Americans to fight. We have it within our power to help the Iraqi people build Iraq to become an exporter of stability in the region instead of the source of deadly weapons of war and oppression.

By putting Iraq on the path to economic opportunity and democracy, we will shift the entire strategic direction of the Middle East. By finishing the job we started, we will ensure a safer future for our own people.

I look forward to this debate in Senate, and I am confident that the outcome will be overwhelming support for the President of the United States.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2691, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2691) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid amendment No. 1731, to prohibit the use of funds for initiating any new competitive sourcing studies.

Reid amendment No. 1732, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire certain lands located in Nye County, Nevada.

Reid amendment No. 1733, to provide for the conveyance of land to the city of Las Vegas, Nevada, for the construction of affordable housing for seniors.

Daschle amendment No. 1734, to provide additional funds for clinical services of the Indian Health Service, with an offset.

Daschle amendment No. 1739, to strike funding for implementation of the Department of the Interior's reorganization plan for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Office of Special Trustee and to transfer the savings to the Indian Health Service.

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, as we continue to work on the Interior appropriations this afternoon and tomorrow—and it appears there will be a couple of votes later on this evening—I wish to bring to the attention of Senators and to this country what we are talking about when we talk about healthy forests and why our requests for more money to replace the accounts in the Forest Service, in the Department of Agriculture, in the Bureau of Land Management, in the Fish and Wildlife Service, and in the Park Service in the Department of the Interior are important.

I stated on Thursday that this problem of forest fires which we have had in the West is a national problem and one we have to address if we are to manage our land for the environment, for the safety of those who work and recreate on public lands, and if we are to have public lands which Americans deserve and have paid for.

Once again, we have had a terrible fire season. Over 3 million acres have burned—most of it in the West and about a third of the acreage in my home State of Montana. I guess that makes us a little bit more sensitive about what we can do and what we can't do when it comes to forest fires and the protection of life, wildlife, and the health of our forests.

We took a firsthand look at the devastating impact of these fires on our parks, forests, and communities in August. We had a very dry and hot August in Montana. The fires were so bad in Glacier National Park and Yellowstone Park that they were closed to the public for many days. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality was issuing a daily alert for dangerous air and air quality throughout the State of Montana.

The impact of these fires goes far beyond losing trees, brush, and the flora of the forests of our Nation. We see a lot of the other ramifications also. Wildlife is destroyed and wildlife habitat is destroyed.

I will reiterate a conversation I had with some folks who lived here in Maryland who were watching the fire burn in Glacier. They were concerned about the loss of wildlife in those fires. They were concerned about endangered species. Where do they go? I said wherever they go, they will not have a habitat to come back to.

Another impact is poor air quality. Seniors and other people with respiratory problems suffer from the heaviest smoke which we have seen in many years. In fact, the airport in Missoula, MT, had to be shut down one day because of smoke.

The aftermath of these fires means contaminated streams and watersheds. Those watersheds not only feed wildlife but they also feed the municipal water supplies of our State.

Tourism in Montana is a huge industry. So there are lost recreational opportunities. Businesses and homes were destroyed. In fact, over 700 buildings and homes were lost. Unfortunately, there was also loss of life. Statewide, 27 firefighters lost their lives this year in wildfires.

We have an opportunity to act now to address the poor conditions of our forests and rangelands before they get any worse. We have an opportunity to change the conditions for the future of our kids and our grandkids.

In back of me is a map that depicts a great deal of both the east side and west side of the country which contain class 2 and 3 conditions. These conditions are classified as highly dangerous—or, let us say, flammable. I think the color red is pretty apropos. Not only do we see a lot of red up there in the panhandle of Idaho northwest of Montana, but look at the conditions in Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and you can't overlook the conditions in Oregon and Northern California. In fact, those fire conditions run all the way down the Sierras in California. We have seen devastating fires there; fire conditions in South Dakota, in the Black Hills in the western part of the State; and over in the eastern part of the State, conditions for rain showers.

Nonetheless, we have to prepare for dry years. If you compare this last year to the drought of the 1930s, which was just as bad, had we not changed the way we farmed and ranched, we would

have had another Kansas dust bowl, an Oklahoma dust bowl. This time it would have been more far reaching, reaching on up into the high plains of the Dakotas.

Look at northeastern Minnesota. Minnesota is almost solid red. Yet their fuel on the floor, the density of their forests, tells us it is high priority for fire. We see depicted the Ozarks of Missouri, the southern part of the State around the Lake of the Ozarks, reaching down almost to Poplar Bluff, into the southeastern part of the State.

If people in the northeast United States are not worried about what is west of the Mississippi River, take a look at the northern part of Pennsylvania and the wonderful forests of upstate New York. Right now our fuel load is high. Of course, after the storm this last week we might have a little more moisture; nonetheless, the fuel is there when it dries out.

Look at West Virginia. Look at Virginia. Look at Alabama. All of this is a national problem. Firefighters who were fighting the fires in the West—in Oregon, Idaho, and Montana this last time—came from Florida; the firefighters on the Robert fires were from North Carolina; firefighters from Kentucky—they are all trying to get the fires under control. This is not just a western problem; it is a problem for the forests nationwide. That is what it is all about when we talk about these situations.

The buildup of forest fuels occurred due to past management—or the lack of past management practices. Those practices allowed ladder fuel to grow into the healthy crowns of large trees; practices that did not effectively treat insect infestations and thus the high mortality rates in our forests; practices that did not effectively let us treat for tree mortality.

We talk about thinning and taking fuel off the forest floor. I would love to see a demo project comparing thinned and unthinned forests. Let one forest grow with no management and have an area not too far away that has been managed. Fire behavior in managed and unmanaged forests is quite different.

I remember as a young man way back I was on a couple of fires: The Edith Peak fire in Montana in 1953—and we lost a person on that fire, by the way—and the Tango fire in 1953. We learned a lot about how these fires react. I can state firsthand these fires now are hotter and are more devastating. There is more fuel on the floor of the forests.

This picture on the left is of a forest that has been thinned. In other words, the underbrush has been taken out, some of the trees have been thinned, and the larger trees can then grow. Where the sun is shut out part-time, you do not have nearly the amount of underbrush for fuel. Compare that to the picture on the right where nothing was done in the forest. Notice the downed timber and the old logs on the floor of the forest. They bored the logs