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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. STEVENS].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Lord God, the source of our highest joy, remind us that only in Your will can we find true peace and happiness. Change our hearts so that our actions will glorify Your name. Lord, bring us from behind our barricades of selfishness and teach us that it is more blessed to give than to receive. As Senators labor today, fill them with Your spirit so that they will seek to know and do the right thing. Save them from disunity and from decisions made solely in the name of politics. Give wisdom to their advisers, and throughout each day may each of us find moments to seek You in prayer. We pray this in Your strong name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning, the Senate will conduct a period for morning business to allow Senators to speak. Following morning business, at approximately 10:30 a.m., the Senate will resume consideration of the Interior appropriations bill. Under the order from last night, there will be 10

additional minutes for debate in relation to Senator DASCHLE's amendment on Indian health care. Therefore, the first vote of today's session will occur at approximately 10:45 a.m. Following that vote, we hope to be in a position to schedule additional votes on some of the other pending amendments.

We will recess from 12:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. for the weekly party luncheons to meet, and it is our hope to have additional votes prior to that recess.

We do expect to finish the appropriations bill today or this evening, if necessary. Once completed, we will continue with other appropriations bills, possibly the DC appropriations legislation.

I also remind Members once again that we will be scheduling votes on available judicial nominations and others throughout the week.

Over the course of the last 24 hours, people have been recovering in the region from the natural disaster we had last week. Our thoughts and prayers go out to them, of course. There are many people, including many people in this body, who do not have electricity or are having water problems. We had rain last night, so we have continued problems. We will continue to work together to get people back to normal lives, but our thoughts and prayers are with them.

Lastly, as I mentioned yesterday, this week is a very busy week in addressing the request for \$87 billion to further the war against terrorism, and our goal is to have a good debate, good exchange of information, asking the tough questions. That started yesterday afternoon with some fantastic hearings chaired by the President pro tempore, who is in the Chair now, that went into last evening. Hearings will be held by a number of other committees over the course of this week, both in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Next week, I hope to be able to address the request on the floor of the

Senate. I would like to aim for having that request completed by the end of next week and before we go out for the following week.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The assistant minority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there are a number of amendments pending—the Bingaman amendment and another Daschle amendment. Unless something can be worked out with the managers, I am sure we can dispose of those by votes prior to the recess. Also, I say to the leader, that with respect to the contracting-out amendment, which will take a little more debate, we will be ready to vote around 3 o'clock on that amendment. At least the way amendments are now stacked, that is the most contentious amendment that has been filed.

I also say in the presence of the majority leader, and for Senators on our side and on the other side, the two managers are waiting for amendments. If there are amendments to be offered, they should do that as quickly as possible. Progress has been made more rapidly than I thought on this bill. With a little bit of good fortune, we can complete this bill fairly early this evening.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I will close. I know people will be coming over to speak in morning business. We have an hour.

PRESIDENT BUSH'S VISIT TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today President Bush will be addressing the United Nations, and he is asking those who champion freedom to pull together and support the reconstruction of Iraq. He will make a powerful case because freedom is a powerful force. Freedom is a beacon to people all over this land—

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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indeed, all over the world. It leads countries to greatness and men and women to their highest aspirations. We look forward to hearing his comments later this morning.

It is clear this body will stand by the Iraqis, will help them build a free, prosperous, and democratic Iraq. Their future, indeed, our security and the security of civilized people everywhere depends on it.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I also certainly wish the President the best of luck at the United Nations today. I think it is extremely important we have more support from the international community. I am very happy to see the President going there seeking that help.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business not to exceed 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak therein, with the first 30 minutes under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee, and the remaining 30 minutes under the control of the Senator from Texas, Mrs. HUTCHISON, or her designee.

Mr. FRIST. 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. BENNETT. 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. BENNETT. I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to proceed for 15 minutes on the Republican time.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I have no objection, but I will indicate that I desire to follow the distinguished Senator from Utah. I will seek recognition at that time for another 4 to 6 minutes.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Does the Senator seek unanimous consent at this time?

Mr. WARNER. Yes.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Virginia will be recognized following the Senator from Utah.

The Senator from Utah is recognized.

A CHARGE AGAINST THE PRESIDENT

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, over the weekend the country heard one of the more senior Members of this body, the senior Senator from Massachusetts, make a charge against the President of the United States, particularly with respect to the war in Iraq.

The senior Senator from Massachusetts said the war in Iraq was "hatched in Texas" in a conversation between the President of the United States and the Republican leadership and that the purpose of attacking Iraq was to help the Republicans politically in the congressional elections of 2002. The Senator from Massachusetts summarized the President's position with respect to the war in a single word. He called it a "fraud."

To quote a comment from the Washington Post in another situation dealing with Iraq, this is a serious charge and it deserves a serious response. It is my attempt today to give a serious response to this charge.

If the charge made by the senior Senator from Massachusetts is accurate, then the President is deserving of a serious rebuke. If in fact the charge is not accurate, the senior Senator from Massachusetts is deserving of a serious rebuke.

I intend to examine whether or not the charge could be substantiated and give it the attention that I think it does in fact deserve.

I will turn not to sources that are friendly to the President of the United States; I will go in my analysis to those who have been critical of President Bush with respect to Iraq and to his Presidency generally.

Let me start by quoting a Presidential statement with respect to Iraq:

Saddam Hussein's priorities are painfully clear, not caring for his citizens but building weapons of mass destruction and using them—using them not once, but repeatedly in the terrible war Iraq fought with Iran, and not only against combatants but against civilians, and not only against a foreign adversary but against his own people, and he has targeted Scud missiles against fellow Arabs in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain.

Nobody wants to use force, but if Saddam Hussein refuses to keep his commitments to the international community, we must be prepared to deal directly with the threat these weapons pose to the Iraqi people, to Iraq's neighbors, and to the rest of the world. Either Saddam acts, or we will have to.

As I say, that was a Presidential quote, but it was not from George W. Bush, and it was not after a meeting in Texas between George W. Bush and Republican leaders. That was a statement made by President William Jefferson Clinton on February 20, 1998—long before the congressional elections of 2002 and 2 years before George W. Bush became President of the United States.

The suggestion that President Bush created the fraud or the specter that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction does not stand up against that statement by President Clinton.

I make reference to the Washington Post. This is a newspaper that is not known for its support of either Republicans or President Bush. But they were a supporter of attacking Iraq and, as I have said, there were those who charged the Washington Post editors with a "jingoistic rush to war," and the paper said, as I have noted:

That is a serious charge and it deserves a serious response.

Then the paper goes on to make these comments:

In fact, there is nothing sudden or precipitous about our view that Saddam Hussein poses a grave danger.

Quoting further:

In 1997 and 1998, we strongly backed President Clinton when he vowed that Iraq must finally honor its commitments to the United Nations to give up its nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, and we strongly criticized him when he retreated from those vows.

Again, that was a comment made after the supposed meeting in Texas and made after the congressional elections of 2002. If, indeed, President Bush made the decision to go into Iraq for purely political reasons, why would the Washington Post, which is not one of President Bush's supporters, be commenting after those congressional elections in a way that makes it clear they came to the same conclusion that President Bush did?

Would the Senator from Massachusetts suggest that the Washington Post was part of the conspiracy that went on in Texas prior to the congressional elections, and that the Washington Post was complicit in the fraud visited on the American people by the decision to go ahead in Iraq?

The Post editorial goes on, and this was February 27, 2003:

When we cite Mr. Clinton's perceptive but ultimately empty comments, it is in part to chide him and other Democrats who take a different view now that a Republican is in charge. But it has a more serious purpose, too. Mr. Clinton could not muster the will, or the domestic or international support, to force Saddam Hussein to live up to the promises he had made in 1991, though even then the danger was well understood.

We need not stay within our shores to find those who believe the President made the right decision in Iraq. Let us go overseas. I had occasion to visit with a group of European Parliamentarians. One of them, who came from Great Britain, made this comment to me. He said they have never had a politician in Great Britain who is as poll-driven as Tony Blair, and they never had one who pays so much attention to focus groups. The man said Tony Blair almost allows focus groups to determine what kind of tie he will wear in the morning. Yet when we come to this Iraq business, said this particular Parliamentarian, Tony Blair is going against all of the polls and all of the focus groups. He is acting in a manner that is completely uncharacteristic for him as a politician. He is actually willing to risk his position as Prime Minister in order to make sure we go after Saddam Hussein. He said they cannot understand it, except on one possible basis, and that is that Tony Blair must be completely convinced that the information is correct, that the intelligence is right, and that Saddam Hussein does indeed pose a threat. He said that there is otherwise no explanation for the way he is behaving, that it is contrary to his entire political experience.

Would the senior Senator from Massachusetts suggest that Tony Blair was