

Mr. REID. Those bills have been reported out of committee?

Mr. FRIST. The military tax bill has been reported out. We have the Moscow treaty, which is very important, that we passed through the Foreign Relations Committee. We would like to address that as soon as possible. There are other pieces of legislation that are being looked at now. So we do have a number of items we can go to.

Mr. REID. One final question, Mr. President: What time do you expect the vote to be on Monday? We have people on our side, and I am sure on your side, who are interested in that.

Mr. FRIST. Approximately 5 o'clock.

Mr. REID. I would just say, if we could make that 5:15, it helps one of our Senators.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished assistant Democratic leader. I know that our Republican colleagues are hoping to adjourn shortly so they can accommodate their schedule. I want to respect that, but I know Senator BIDEN also wanted to come to the floor for some brief remarks with regard to North Korea, which is why I originally came to the floor.

I wish to comment for a moment and thank the distinguished Senator from Nevada for his comments on the Estrada nomination. I think it may arguably be the most serious of all nominations which has been presented to the Senate by this administration—the seriousness of knowing so little with so little information having been provided, and with so significant a level of intransigency with regard to a willingness to provide the information we seek. We have a constitutional obligation to advise and consent.

For the life of me, I don't understand how anybody could be called upon to vote on the qualifications of this or any other individual with so little information provided, and with the arrogance demonstrated by this nominee and in this case by the administration with regard to our right to that information.

I am very troubled. I know when you look at the array of Hispanic organizations that have now publicly declared their opposition to a Hispanic nominee, you get some appreciation of the depth of feeling about this issue, about this candidate, about his qualifications, and about the stakes as we consider filling a position in the second highest court in the land.

I will have a lot more to say about this next week.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now return to legislative session and proceed to a period for morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DASCHLE. Reserving the right to object, I know Senator BIDEN had hoped to be heard.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, if the Democratic leader will hold it for just one second, we will allow plenty of opportunity. Be thinking of the time that you need.

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

THE ONGOING CRISIS IN NORTH KOREA

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I commend the Secretary of State for the strong presentation to the United Nations Security Council that he made yesterday. He confirmed what many of us already knew—that Saddam Hussein is a threat who has, once again, failed to live up to his commitments to the international community.

And he did it at a place many of us had been pressing him and the administration to do it—at the United Nations.

I hope that President Bush will use Secretary Powell's presentation to build a broad international coalition to confront Iraq. Our national security is better served if he does.

But, as the world's attention was focused on Secretary Powell and his presentation, an even more ominous development regarding weapons of mass destruction was taking place in North Korea.

Yesterday, North Korea announced that it had flipped the switch and restarted a power plant that can be used to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons.

This is but the latest in a series of aggressive steps North Korea has taken to kick into gear its programs to develop weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them—steps that our intelligence community believes indicate that Iraq is months, if not years, away from being able to take.

At the U.N., Colin Powell talked about the potential that Iraq may build a missile that could travel 1,200 kilometers. In 1998, North Korea fired a multi-stage rocket over Japan, proving they are capable of hitting one of America's closest allies—and soon, America itself.

In November 2001, intelligence analysts presented a report to senior administration officials that concluded North Korea had begun construction of a plant to enrich uranium for use in nuclear weapons.

In October 2002, North Korea informed visiting U.S. officials that it had a covert nuclear weapons program.

In December 2002, North Korea turned off cameras that were being used to ensure that 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods were not being converted into weapons-grade material.

Days later, North Korea kicked out an international team of weapons inspectors.

And, within the past week, the administration confirmed that North Korea has begun moving these fuel rods to an undisclosed location.

On Tuesday, former Assistant Secretary of Defense and Korea expert Ashton Carter called these events “a huge foreign policy defeat for the United States and a setback for decades of U.S. non-proliferation policy.”

He is right. But it is potentially even worse. North Korea could have six to eight additional nuclear weapons before autumn.

And we know, when it comes to nuclear weapons—it only takes one. Remember, everything North Korea makes, North Korea sells.

Those scuds we intercepted on a ship to Yemen—and then inexplicably returned—weren't a gift. They were an example of business as usual from what even this administration has acknowledged is the world's worst proliferator.

As alarming as this information is, the administration's reaction is even more troubling. The President said in the State of the Union:

the gravest danger in the war on terror . . . is outlaw regimes that seek and possess nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

As the chronology of events I detailed above indicates, the administration knew about North Korea's plans on enriching uranium as early as November 2001, and yet it has said little, and done less, to stop these plans.

We have heard the administration—through leaks in the press from unnamed sources—suggest that we cannot focus on North Korea because it will distract attention from Iraq.

And we have even heard—and this is on the record—that some in the administration believe that North Korea's expansion of its nuclear arsenal is not even necessarily a problem.

Proliferators with nuclear weapons are a problem—a serious one. And our attention should be focused on all the threats we face. It is well past time that the administration develop a clear policy on North Korea.

Earlier this week, an administration official testified before the Senate that we will have to talk directly to the North Koreans. But he went on to say that the administration had not reached out to the North Koreans to schedule talks and did not know when that might happen.

In the State of the Union, the President stated that the United States is “working with the countries of the region . . . to find a peaceful solution.” All indications, however, suggest that the countries in the region appear to be taking a course directly at odds with the administration's latest pronouncements.

North Korea is a grave threat that seems to grow with each day that passes without high-level U.S. engagement. It is one the President must redouble his efforts to confront.

The President should stop downplaying this threat, start paying more attention to it, and immediately engage the North Koreans in direct talks.

Secretary Powell was very effective in outlining the threats Iraq poses. But

we need a comprehensive strategy to effectively deal with “all” the threats we face.

Given the stakes of this situation and the ongoing confusion about the President’s and the administration’s policy, we should expect no less.

ENERGY POLICY

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, midday today President Bush is going to give a speech here in Washington, DC, on the subject of the development of fuel cell vehicles and moving to a hydrogen economy.

I was glad to hear the President express support for the concept of hydrogen and fuel cells in his State of the Union Address. After his speech, I gave him credit for discussing that with the American people.

Since last year, I have made a number of presentations on the Senate floor about fuel cells. Today, I would like to share with my colleagues my thoughts about the development of a hydrogen economy and the use of fuel cells in our future.

I have told all my colleagues previously that my first vehicle when I was a kid was an antique car I purchased for \$25. It was a 1924 Model T Ford. I am sure people are tired of hearing me talk about it. I was 16 years old, and I was the owner of an antique 1924 Model T Ford. I restored it. It took me a year and a half to 2 years to do that. I lovingly restored this old Model T. Then I sold it. I discovered, later in high school, that I wanted to date, and a Model T was not exactly a modern way to date.

The point of the story is, when I was a kid I put gasoline in a Model T Ford—a 1924 Model T Ford—the same way you put gasoline in a 2003 Ford. Nothing has changed in three-quarters of a century. You pull up to a pump. You pull the hose and put the nozzle in the tank and pump gas. The core technology has not changed.

Over the years, however, our dependence on a foreign source of that petroleum has worsened, and become very dangerous for our economy.

Yesterday, the Secretary of State made a presentation at the United Nations about the country of Iraq. Frankly, Iraq produces a lot of oil. So do other countries in that region.

It is a very troubled region. Yet our economy is dependent on foreign sources of energy, much of it from that region. Is that something that makes sense for us, for the American economy, for the American people? The answer is no.

By talking about a technological change to a hydrogen economy and to the use of fuel cells, I am not suggesting we should not and will not mine for coal, drill for oil and natural gas. I believe we will continue to use fossil fuel in our economy for a long while. And I believe we need to do that.

But we also need to understand that it is time to change. After a century of

running gasoline through the carburetors of our vehicles, it is time for our country to think in different ways, about how can technology change our energy future. I would like to talk a bit about that.

Again, let me say that I credit the President for talking about it in his State of the Union Address. I think this is a step forward on the part of the administration—a baby step to be sure—but an important step.

Mr. President, \$1.2 billion is what the President announced last week and is talking about today. That is not all new money. In fact, the majority of it is not new money. So it is a timid, small step forward, but, nonetheless, a step in the right direction, for which I give this President credit.

Let me talk a bit about why we need to take strong action. I have in the Chamber a chart that shows oil consumption—in millions of barrels per day. This shows total demand, and you see the line going up, up, up, and up. It also shows transportation demand, and that growth in transportation demand is the bulk of the growth in energy needs and energy usage in our country.

As you can see from the chart, shown here is domestic production. Domestic production does not come close to meeting the demand that exists in our country. So what do we do to meet the difference? What we do is we import oil from other parts of the world.

The issue of energy security is a significant issue for all of us. The White House issued a press release on that subject in connection with its hydrogen proposal, noting the gap between our projected demand for oil and our domestic supply. And that gap is going to increase, not decrease—even if we would drill in ANWR, which I do not think this Congress will decide to do.

This is what the White House had to say in proposing development of fuel cells:

America’s energy security is threatened by our dependence on foreign oil.

Absolutely. There is no question about that.

America imports 55 percent of the oil it consumes; that is expected to grow to 68 percent by the year 2025. Nearly all of our cars and trucks run on gasoline. They are the main reason America imports so much oil. Two-thirds of the 20 million barrels of oil Americans use each day is used for transportation.

The President went on to say:

Fuel cell vehicles offer the best hope of dramatically reducing our dependence on foreign oil.

If tonight, God forbid, a network of terrorists interrupted the supply of imported oil to this country, tomorrow morning this economy would be in desperate, desperate trouble. That is the jeopardy we have in this country with our dependence—overdependence—on foreign sources of energy.

Let me describe where this dependence resides. And one can make one’s own judgment about the stability of it all.

Our top supplier of oil is Saudi Arabia. That is not exactly describing a region of stability. Saudi Arabia is our top supplier. And then you have Mexico, Canada, Venezuela, Nigeria, Iraq, Angola, Norway, Colombia. Mr. President, 3.4 million barrels are imported into this country from these countries. And you understand—everyone understands—that Venezuela is in trouble. There is enormous turmoil in the country of Venezuela. Saudi Arabia, Iraq—these are areas of the world where there is not great stability.

It makes no sense to continue along, merrily whistling our way into the future, believing that our country will be just fine even as our economy is so dependent on sources of oil from outside our borders.

One-third of our oil comes from the Middle East. Iraq is the sixth largest supplier of oil; Venezuela is the fourth; Angola and Colombia, the seventh and ninth—both countries are also plagued with difficulties.

Hydrogen fuels offer a way out. The supply of hydrogen is inexhaustible. It is everywhere. It is in water. The issue of hydrogen fuels is an interesting one. The notion of using hydrogen and the development of fuel cells is not new. In fact, a man named William Robert Grove was one of those larger-than-life characters who in the 19th century could do almost anything. He studied law at Oxford, became a barrister and a judge. In his spare time, he was also a professor of physics. He ran into a patch of ill health and had his legal career interrupted, so he turned to science to occupy his time, and he developed what he called a gas voltaic battery, the forerunner of modern fuel cells.

He based his experiment on the notion that sending an electric current through water splits water into oxygen and hydrogen. He figured if you could reverse the reaction, combining hydrogen and oxygen, you can produce electricity and water. In effect, he burned the hydrogen to produce electricity.

Hydrogen can be derived from all sorts of energy sources. You take the hydrogen from water and use it to move through a fuel cell and use it to power an automobile and out the back tailpipe, you get water vapor. What a wonderful thing.

This is a picture of a Daimler-Chrysler fuel cell vehicle that in June of last year went from San Francisco to Washington, DC. This technology exists. It is being perfected.

The next chart shows a Ford fuel cell vehicle ready for production, a prototype, in autumn 2002. This is not a futuristic technology; there are fuel cell cars on the road today. I have driven a fuel cell car out in front of the Capitol Building, a car that is run by batteries powered by a fuel cell, that is using hydrogen as a fuel source.

The challenge is to make this technology cost effective. I have been meeting with the CEOs and representatives of companies, Shell Hydrogen,