

So, too, could you evaluate the value system of this country and this Congress by this budget we are voting on today.

I am going to vote against this budget. I will tell you why. Because I think in the rearview mirror, this budget represents a value system that misses much of what is important about what our obligation is today.

We are at war. We are at war with terrorists. We are at war in Iraq. We have a responsibility to protect our homeland. We have a serious threat with respect to North Korea, apparently now building additional nuclear weapons.

What does this budget document tell us is the most important element in the Federal Government? They say the most important element is to give those who have the highest incomes in America more tax cuts.

Let me turn to page 6 and tell you what this budget document says. This budget document says, assume all of the President's proposed tax cuts, most of which go to wealthy Americans—assume that. This is the result on page 6: By the year 2013, this country will have a nearly \$12 trillion Federal debt—this country will have a nearly \$12 trillion debt. The gross debt will be \$11.919 trillion—almost \$12 trillion.

We are saying to those men and women fighting for this country today, you go ahead and pursue this battle on behalf of America and when you come back what we will do is burden you, we will saddle your shoulders with all of this debt because the priority in this budget is tax cuts, most of which will go to upper income Americans.

We heard all day yesterday on amendments that this is going to hurt the growth package. What growth? Where is the growth? The only growth I see in this package is going from \$6.6 trillion in debt to \$12 trillion in debt. Yes, it is on page 6. That assumes all the tax cuts. This is the President's plan. The plan is to go to \$12 trillion in debt. I don't think that is much of a plan. This grows the economy, does it? It produces new jobs, new economic opportunity? New tax revenues? I guess not, not if you are going to go to a \$12 trillion gross debt. I do not understand at all what on Earth is happening here.

About 2 years ago we had this debate about dramatically increased tax cuts. Some of us said let's be a bit conservative. The President said, no, there is no need to be conservative; let's pass all these tax cuts. Then we had a recession. The technology bubble burst. The stock market pancaked. We had 9/11. We had a war on terrorism. We had the largest corporate scandals in decades and decades—perhaps in this country's history. And the result, of course, was very large budget surpluses turned to very large budget deficits.

Now we are told if we just pass this budget it will be better. But look on page 6. Assuming all the President wants, assuming all he asks us to do, on page 6, they say, in the year 2013,

our gross debt will be nearly \$12 trillion. Explain that. Explain this. It makes no sense. That is why I am going to vote no.

RECONSTRUCTION AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN IRAQ

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, let me make a comment about another item. We will be, later this week, responding to the President's request for a supplemental appropriations.

Clearly, we need to provide supplemental funding. We will not send America's sons and daughters to war and then decide we will not provide the funds necessary. This Congress will and must.

One piece, however, of this request by the President is for reconstruction assistance in Iraq, and humanitarian assistance. Should we do humanitarian assistance? You bet we should. Absolutely. It ought to be a first priority.

But reconstruction? Let me make the case that reconstruction in Iraq, in my judgment, should be funded from Iraqi resources and Iraqi oil. This is a country rich in resources, endowed with very substantial oil reserves.

While I will support reconstruction in Iraq, I am one who believes, when the job in Iraq is finished, the resources and the oil that exists in the country of Iraq ought to produce the revenue for the reconstruction of Iraq. I intend to make that case in the Appropriations Committee later this week and next week here in the Congress.

COVERAGE OF THE WAR ON TELEVISION

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, let me make one final point while I am in the Chamber.

I came to talk about this budget and the \$12 trillion of debt that this budget document heads us toward. Let me make one final point. I watch the television coverage every morning, as do most Americans, with respect to the war. And my thoughts and prayers are with our soldiers. My thoughts and prayers are with the innocent folks in Iraq. We have no quarrel with the Iraqi citizens. This is with Saddam Hussein and his regime.

It breaks my heart to see casualties on any side. But one of the things that concerns me, in the mornings when I watch this coverage, or in the evenings before I retire and I watch this coverage, is there are a number of retired generals and admirals and others who stand before the cameras, showing us, on the maps, exactly where our troops are moving, exactly what the strategy is, saying: Here is the route to Baghdad for this division and that division.

I ask myself: I wonder if that is in the interests of the American soldiers fighting in Iraq. I just wonder. Do we need to have retired officers, with pointers, pointing to maps and saying, "Here is where this division is going;

here is where I think it is going to be," and some saying, "I disagree with the current strategy"?

I worry a lot about whether the information provided to the other side—the information provided to our adversaries from that kind of briefing that goes on on every channel, every network, by retired officers, who know a great deal about battle plans—I wonder whether they should be offering that precise analysis of exactly where troop movements are on television morning, noon, and night.

The 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week coverage on this is something I think provides information to the American people—and I think we want information—but I do not believe anyone wants information disclosed during this 24-7 news cycle in a manner that would in any way alert the adversary about what is happening.

I worry sometimes, when I see this on television: Is this healthy? Is more information made available, by retired generals and admirals and others who are analyzing troop movements, than really should be made available to our adversaries? I just ask the question. I think it is an important question to ask. I intend to ask it this morning in the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, where I will return in just a few moments.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator will state his inquiry, please.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I ask, what is the parliamentary situation?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. We are in morning business until 11:30, at which time we will proceed out of morning business to resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 23.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, has morning business been allocated equally to each side?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. By unanimous consent, we have the Senator from Virginia to speak next. And I believe the time will be equally divided after that.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak following the Senator from Virginia. As I understand it, the Senator from Virginia is now to be recognized to speak. I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak following the Senator from Virginia.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I will certainly accede to that, but that then we should indicate the Senator from Utah would follow the Senator from Maryland, if that is agreeable.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I would also

like to get in this queue. So we make sure, maybe we can specify the times as well so that we know that we have got enough time before 11:30.

How much time does the Senator from Virginia—

Mr. WARNER. I say to my distinguished colleague, about 10 minutes.

Mr. CONRAD. How much time does the Senator from Maryland seek?

Mr. SARBANES. How much time would there be available?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. We have until 11:30 in morning business.

Mr. CONRAD. So there would be 25 minutes.

Mr. SARBANES. Yes. Equally divided?

Mr. CONRAD. Would that be fair for the Senator, if we equally divide the remaining time?

Mr. BENNETT. Reserving the right to object, I want to accommodate my friend and more senior colleague, but I had understood that the time was equally divided between the two sides; the Republicans would have 11 to 11:30, and the Democrats from 10:30 to 11. If that were not done, I would be more than happy to split the time available, after the Senator from Virginia is finished, with the Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be 10 minutes for the Senator from Virginia, followed by the Senator from Maryland for 8 minutes, the Senator from Utah for 8 minutes, and 8 minutes for the Senator from North Dakota.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. WARNER. Reserving the right to object, and then the time remaining would be accorded to someone on this side of the aisle, should that person appear to seek that recognition?

Mr. CONRAD. I think that will actually use up all the time, I say to the Senator.

Mr. WARNER. If there is time remaining, then it would return to this side.

Mr. CONRAD. All right.

Mr. WARNER. I do not object.

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

The Senator from Virginia.

SUPPORTING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise this morning with a deep sense of humility to express this Senator's gratitude for the courage and bravery being displayed from our President, Commander in Chief, to the Secretaries of State and Defense, and to, particularly, General Franks and General Abizaid, and those immediately in charge of the operations in Iraq, and, most importantly, to the men and women of the Armed Forces under these commands, and their families.

We all start this morning with expressing our deepest condolences to the families and loved ones who have lost

members of the Armed Forces. That is the cost of freedom.

As we watch unfolding the pictorial representation of these families, as they boldly step up to appear on media, all of us cannot but be heartened by the courage that the families are showing, and as exemplified by the men and women in uniform fighting this battle.

I thought to myself, there were roughly 1,300,000 men and women on active duty prior to the commencement of the larger operations in Iraq. And as the buildup progressed, the President called up roughly 300,000—somewhat short of that—so for ease of mathematics, about 1.5 million are now on active service, together with their families. I always mention the families.

In that 1.5 million, if you juxtapose it with the total population of this Nation of 290 million, roughly one-half of 1 percent—one-half of 1 percent—of our population is out there assuming the full risks of loss of life and limb to defend freedom and to defend this Nation. That shows the magnitude of the depth of gratitude that we have to all those who are engaged in this conflict.

We have conducted—and I commend the administration—each morning, at 9 o'clock, a briefing in S-407. All Senators are invited. We have had very good attendance. We will have, this afternoon, from 5:30 to 6:30, a briefing with the Secretary of Defense in S-407 again for all Senators. But the questions raised there are very good questions. They are tough questions.

I assure America that the Senate is involved in its oversight responsibilities as a coequal branch in this conflict, in the judgment of this Senator. I am proud of the large participation from numbers of our Senators—questions about the magnitude of the battle plan; is that sufficient?

Our colleague from North Dakota just mentioned that there had been a lot of criticism. That is part of the freedoms we enjoy. Those who have served honorably in our Armed Forces are coming forth with their expertise. Frankly, I follow it very carefully. I think it has been constructive on the whole. Nevertheless, the Secretary of Defense, here in the Vice President's office yesterday afternoon when he met with several of us, was asked questions on the battle plan. He very firmly said this battle plan was conceived carefully. It went through the Joint Chiefs, not once, not twice, but perhaps a dozen times, and was shared with our principal ally, Great Britain, and others. I have total confidence in the manner in which this war is being conducted by our military commanders and, indeed, by the Commander in Chief, the President.

The question of the prisoners of war is very much on our minds. It is hoped that the Senate will address this issue in the near future. I have been in consultation, as have other Senators, with the distinguished leadership on both sides. It is important that this institution express its strong sentiment for

the care and protection and adherence to international law as this conflict ensues.

The coalition has been very substantial, over 40 nations. I will ask unanimous consent to print in the RECORD following my remarks a communication from the distinguished Ambassador to the United States from Australia, Mr. Michael Thawley, along with the comments of the Prime Minister of Australia.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. WARNER. Australia has been a vital part of the coalition from the beginning. They have forces in country in Iraq now assisting in many aspects for the success of this operation.

This morning at around 6:30, I watched the Prime Minister of Great Britain address Parliament just prior to his departure for the United States to confer with our President today. In the course of that dissertation—it is always fascinating for those of us in the Congress to watch their freewheeling system—the first question out of the box to the Prime Minister: Will you talk to the President, impressing upon him the need to address the conflict in the Middle East, most specifically, the remarks made by the President just recently as to reasserting once again the efforts of this President to foster the peace process.

This brings to mind a thought this Senator has had for some time as to one idea—it is just an idea, a concept, a concept that might help to bring about some stability in that region—a cessation of some hopefully large measure of the conflict so that the talks can get under way. It is difficult to see how any constructive talks can take place without the cessation of the fighting, the human bombing employed by the Palestinians, and the retaliation, that is really necessary but all too often takes place before the cameras, as a disproportionate use of force in the eyes of the world, by the Israelis, who have been afflicted so grievously by these human bombs.

I ask unanimous consent to print in the RECORD a letter I wrote to the President just a week or so ago, on March 14.

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

(See exhibit 2.)

Mr. WARNER. I will now address the contents of the letter.

Dear Mr. President: I would like to commend you on the step you took today to give new impetus to the Middle East process by announcing that it was time to share with Israel and the Palestinians the road map to peace that the United States has developed with its "Quartet" partners. This is a welcome and timely initiative, given the complex way in which the Middle East conflict, Iraq and the global war against terrorism are intertwined.

I pointed out that I have given basically this same set of remarks in connection on the floor three times. I have