

Someone who closely watched the debate Thursday night between the President and Senator KERRY noted Senator KERRY had one of these on during the debate. These bands give hope—hope that lives can be saved and this dread disease can be beaten.

I am proud of the progress Nevada is making in this fight against cancer, but it is still unfortunate that too many Nevadans don't have access to quality health care. More than one in five working adults in Nevada have no access to health insurance, perhaps the highest rate in the country. Nationally, we know almost 45 million Americans don't have health insurance, an increase of more than 5 million in just the last 4 years alone.

One reason so many Americans are losing their insurance is because health care costs are spiraling. Employers that do not provide insurance for their employees don't do it because they are cheap or they are mean; they do it because they can't afford it. They know if they have employees with health insurance, they are happier employees.

Health insurance premiums have risen by double digits in the last 4 years. Premiums for a family now have reached about \$10,000. Rising premiums have hit businesses and families, also. An average working family now pays nearly \$2,700 out of their own pockets for premiums, in addition to paying deductibles and copayments.

It is not just premiums that are going up. The American Association of Retired Persons recently reported that, during the first part of this year, prescription drug prices rose more than 3.5 times the rate of inflation. The typical senior citizen will pay \$191 more for prescription drugs this year than last year, and seniors are about to get hit with the largest Medicare premium increase in the history of the program. Monthly Medicare premiums will increase by \$11.60 next year.

Today I am hopeful about the gains we are making in the fight against cancer, but I also know we must do more to get health care costs under control. Unfortunately, the President's Medicare bill that passed last year was a huge giveaway to big insurance companies and drug companies. I happen to think the drug companies and the big insurance companies can take care of themselves. We need to look out for working families who have lost their health insurance, families who are struggling with rising premiums and copayments, and senior citizens who are being pounded by the rising costs for prescription drugs.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask consent that the time run during the quorum call off the time I have left first and then start running off the time of the majority.

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

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, may I inquire about the time remaining in the morning business period?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is currently in morning business. The majority has 30 minutes remaining.

Mr. LOTT. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, many Americans watched the debate between the President and Senator KERRY last week. It was a huge audience, and I think that is encouraging because this is a very important election. Very important decisions will have to be made by the American voters. As always, the issues they were debating are very critical—foreign policy issues, the war on terrorism, the situation in Iraq.

My thoughts now, as I have thought all year, are that this is a time for America to have a sure and steady hand at the tiller. There are a lot of difficult situations around the world. There are a lot of important decisions that must be made and commitments have been made that must be honored. Of course, one of the greatest commitments of all is the commitment we made to the men and women in uniform—men and women serving all over the world, including Afghanistan and Iraq. We don't need an uncertain trumpet at a time such as this. We don't need to be undermining or questioning the job they are doing.

Let me emphasize that I don't question anybody's integrity on that, and I know everybody supports our troops. But what we say has consequences. We need to be particularly careful when it comes to foreign policy.

There were a few times last week when I wanted the President to jump in and make a challenge or a strong statement. But I know he didn't because the President of the United States has to think about what it would mean if he was critical in a debate like that about the United Nations or of a particular country such as, say, France. He withheld the criticism.

But we do need consistency and credibility as we go forward with the war on terrorism, as we deal with the situation in Afghanistan, and as we move toward elections in Iraq. I believe we are doing the right thing now by going in and taking out some of the insurgents and strongholds in Samarra, and I presume we are going to take some similar actions in other parts of Iraq so the people of Iraq can exercise that great right of freedom, the right to vote.

But the areas where I thought more should have been said are three. First,

with regard to North Korea and other parts of the world, Senator KERRY says we need to have the broadest possible coalition; that we should have a summit; we should have done more at the United Nations; we should have done that, this, or the other. But when it comes to North Korea, we should have bilateral negotiations between the United States and North Korea. That was tried in the last administration. I thought they deserved credit for making a valiant effort. I met with former Secretary of Defense Perry, who negotiated with the North Koreans a couple of times. He talked about what they were trying to do. But the fact is, it didn't work; they were cheating.

Now, the President has been saying let us exercise patience. Let us bring in the Chinese, the South Koreans, the Russians, the Japanese, a coalition, a discussion group of six. That makes sense to me.

Why a broad coalition in other parts of the world, but when it comes to North Korea and a very dangerous situation, we want it to be just between the United States and North Korea, bilateral? Why don't we take advantage of the interests of our friends and neighbors in that region and the Chinese, who certainly have a vested interest in what happens in North Korea? Nobody wants North Korea to have nuclear weapons and the ability to deliver them—certainly not the Chinese, the Japanese, or the South Koreans. They are right there.

I think the President is pursuing the right course when it comes to North Korea.

Another area I have taken an interest in—and I know the Senator in the Chair, the Senator from Nebraska, has looked at this and worked on it and worried about it—and that is this question of nuclear proliferation and what we do about the nuclear weapons and the nuclear materials the Russians have.

There is a program called Nunn-Lugar that is working to try to deal with that problem. Senator KERRY says we are not doing it fast enough; that what we are doing would take 13 years, and he could condense it to 4 years. Well, that may be easy to hope for or to say, but you have to make it happen. There is another party in this deal, and they are called the Russians. They have something to say about proliferation.

Would I like to see us do it faster? Should we perhaps put more money in this area? Yes. But the administration has been working in this area. The funding has gone up, and I think it is very important that we do it in such a way that we can make sure the money is going for what it is supposed to; that the money is not siphoned off into corporations that do not do the job and enrich themselves.

You can only do so much credibly in a specified period of time. You need to think about that. You need to work with the Russians.

That is why a delegation of us went to Russia earlier this year. That is why we have a delegation coming from Russia early next year continuing the dialog between the Senate and the Russian Federation Council.

One of the areas we talked about most with the Russians is this particular area. I know Senator LUGAR has worked hard on this issue. Senator LUGAR goes to the sites. He doesn't just talk to the officials; he looks at the sites to see what has happened.

Again, I think there was a problem with what Senator KERRY was saying that was not sufficiently challenged. I am sure it will be challenged over a period of time. But the area that really stood out the most to me was this question of globalization of the war on terrorism. The President raised the question: What does that mean? Are you talking about the United Nations? Are you talking about an organization that for 12 years and 13 resolutions talked tough and didn't do anything? Are you talking about an organization that was supposed to be watching over the Oil for Food Program for the Iraqis that wound up enriching people all over the place and some of our so-called allies being involved, or corporations in those countries being involved in that program in a fraudulent way?

Is that what he was talking about? Or was he talking about the Germans and French?

That is where the President exercised discretion in his comments. But I have to be more specific. Remember the French? They were the ones who had their Foreign Minister aggressively fighting what we were trying to do at the United Nations by flying all over the world, including to Africa, to specifically try to get people, or nations on the Security Council at the United Nations, not to be supportive of the broadest possible coalition.

So when he talked about a broader coalition, again, you need to ask yourself who is he talking about? Is he talking about just the Germans and the French?

I also believe there was a problem with diminishing the coalition which has been helpful—the Brits, the Italians, and the Spanish—until there was a change in administrations—and the Australians. How could you leave out the Australians and the Dutch? And the list goes on and on.

They may not have hundreds of thousands, but they do have hundreds and in some cases thousands. They are doing the job, they are part of the coalition, and we should not diminish the sacrifice they are making with their presence but, more importantly, with their men and women. So I think when we talk about globalization, we need to be very careful.

The President's primary responsibility has to be to the American people. Can we work with other nations? Can we work to have the broadest possible coalition? Can we work with all the international organizations? Yes.

The President cannot ever cede the responsibility for making the decisions and making decisions for the American people to some other entity or to some other country.

I think the debate last week was telling. It was of concern to me because of some of the approaches that were suggested by Senator KERRY.

I hope the American people will look at this very carefully. This is a time for a sure and steady hand, a time for consistency and credibility. President Bush has exhibited all of those traits.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

SENATOR KERRY'S GLOBAL TEST

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, during last week's Presidential debate, the junior Senator from Massachusetts claimed that he would only use preemptive force to protect the American people if that use of force passed something he called a "global test".

Let me repeat exactly what he said, because it is significant and I think the American people need to hear it again. When asked by moderator James Lehrer if he would use preemptive force, Senator KERRY said:

If and when you do it, Jim, you have to do it in a way that passes the test, that passes the global test where your countrymen, your people understand fully why you're doing what you're doing and you can prove to the world that you did it for legitimate reasons.

I have another test for Senator KERRY. It is called the "defense of America" test. It is very simple. There is only one question on the final exam: Would you, as President of the United States, do whatever it takes to defend the American people from another terrorist attack?

If a President fails this test, Americans could die. Let me repeat that, because this is a very serious matter.

If a President fails this all-important test, Americans could die.

Let's look at Senator KERRY's record and see how he scores.

By insisting that any preemptive strike America might take must pass a "global test," Senator KERRY would give France, Germany, or the U.N. a veto over America's right to self-defense. The final decision to protect America would be made not in the Oval Office but in foreign capitals. The final decision to protect America would be made not by an elected American President but by an unelected U.N. diplomats.

If America must submit to a "global test" before acting to defend herself, we may lose the best opportunity to take preemptive action while our "global test graders" dither and delay. Our enemies might attack while we await our "global test grade." Terrorists who cut innocents' heads off—gleefully—on camera—won't hesitate to unleash a horrific attack while America waits for its "global test results."

To cover for his global test, last week Senator KERRY claimed he would do a

better job defending the homeland than President Bush. This despite the President's tripling of homeland security funding, creation of the Department of Homeland Security, and implementation of the USA PATRIOT Act.

I am more of a football fan than a hockey fan, but let me make this analogy. Of course we want as strong a homeland defense as possible. But ultimately, homeland defense is like the goalie on a hockey team: a last chance to stop the enemy. The only way to win is to go on offense, and by subordinating America's right of preemption, Senator KERRY has put his team in the penalty box.

Now, let's suppose Senator KERRY passes his "global test" and decides to use military force. What kind of military would America have, if he had had his way throughout his 20-year career in this body?

He opposed the B-1 bomber that dropped the bombs to destroy the al-Qaeda training bases and Taliban strongholds in Afghanistan.

He opposed the B-2 bomber that drove Saddam Hussein out of his Iraqi command posts and down a spider hole.

He opposed the F-14D Fighter Aircraft that sent missiles into Tora Bora in the hunt for Osama bin Laden, who Senator KERRY claims to want to find.

He opposed the Apache helicopter that destroyed the Iraqi Republican Guard tanks in Kuwait during the first Persian Gulf war.

He opposed the Patriot Missiles that America sent our NATO allies to block the spreading of the Iron Curtain.

He has opposed for 20 years a missile defense system, which could be the last line of defense were a rogue nation like North Korea ever to launch a nuclear weapon.

In the debate last week, he opposed the bunker-buster weapons that can knock loose the terrorists who hide in caves deep under the Afghan desert.

In 1994, after the first attack on the World Trade Center, he proposed cutting intelligence funding by a whopping \$5 billion, and defended his proposal on this very floor by saying, "the madness must end." Most Senators from his own party, including Senator KENNEDY, opposed his proposal.

He has repeatedly voted against pay raises for the troops now in Iraq, choosing instead to boost their morale by telling them they are fighting the "wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time."

He voted against the \$87 billion for our troops in Iraq, even though it included body armor for our soldiers. He then claimed this was a "protest" vote. Let me suggest we should never use our troops as pawns for protest.

Now it is time to grade this test. Again, there is only one question. Would you, as President of the United States, do whatever it takes to defend the American people from another terrorist attack?

Judging from the best evidence—the only evidence—we have, Senator