

through August, September, into October, with the final Senate product being produced yesterday.

As mentioned again and again, what we have done the last several weeks is address nearly all 39 of the 41 recommendations put forth by the 9/11 Commission. The business in the Senate after morning business today will be the remaining 2 of those 41 recommendations put forth by the 9/11 Commission. Those two are very important, in part because they focus on this body, its internal operation of oversight of the intelligence community, and thus we will address that.

Again, I congratulate everyone for their participation. There is no question that the provisions in the bill we passed yesterday will make our Nation safer, it will improve our intelligence community, and will help us immensely in the war on terrorism. That was reflected by the overwhelming support, with only two Senators voting against the bill yesterday.

This is going to be a very busy day but a productive day. Again, we should be able to complete all of our business to be able to depart tomorrow, but if not, we would have to be here into Saturday and whatever time it takes.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 30 minutes, with the first half under the control of the Democratic leader and the second half of the time under the control of the majority leader.

Mr. REID. On behalf of Senator DASCHLE, I yield 15 minutes to the Senator from Massachusetts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

THIRTEEN REASONS WHY AMERICA IS NOT SAFER BECAUSE OF PRESIDENT BUSH'S FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, it was a Presidential election campaign 24 years ago when Ronald Reagan posed the defining question to the American people in that election when he asked, Are you better off today than you were 4 years ago? That basic question has greater relevance now than when Ronald Reagan asked it.

The defining issue today is our national security. Especially in this post-September 11 world, people have the right to ask Ronald Reagan's question in a very specific and all-important way: Are we safer today because of the policies of President Bush?

Any honest assessment can lead to only one answer and that answer is an emphatic no. President Bush is dead wrong and JOHN KERRY is absolutely right: We are not safer today.

The reason we are not safer is because of President Bush's misguided war in Iraq. The President's handling of the war has been a toxic mix of ignorance, arrogance, and stubborn ideology. No amount of Presidential rhetoric or preposterous campaign spin can conceal the truth about the steady downward spiral in our national security since President Bush made the decision to go to war in Iraq.

President Bush keeps saying that America and the world are safer and better off today because Saddam Hussein is gone. No matter how many rhetorical, double-twisting back flips President Bush performs, his disingenuous claim that the war has made America safer is wrong—and may be catastrophically wrong.

There were no weapons of mass destruction.

Across the country we see the newspapers with headlines like this morning's Washington Post headline: "U.S. 'Almost All Wrong' on Weapons." There were no weapons. Here it is in the New York Times this morning: "U.S. Report Finds Iraqis Eliminated Illicit Arms in 90's." "Weapons Capability Had Eroded Before War, Inspector Says."

Here is the recent report, just released yesterday, by the inspector general, who is over there, Charles Duelfer, who followed Dr. Kay. Very professional individuals with strong teams have spent up to \$900 million. This is the central conclusion on page 7:

Iraq did not possess a nuclear device, nor had it tried to reconstitute a capability to produce nuclear weapons after 1991.

Again, in a New York Times editorial this morning entitled "The Verdict Is In":

Since any objective observer should by now have digested the idea that Iraq posed no immediate threat to anyone, let alone the United States, it was disturbing to hear President Bush and Vice President DICK CHENEY continue to try to justify the invasion this week on the grounds that after Sept. 11, 2001, Iraq was clearly the most likely place for terrorists to get illicit weapons. Even if Mr. Hussein had wanted to arm groups he could not control—a very dubious notion—he had nothing to give them.

Those are the facts, Mr. President. And it is important for the administration to finally admit them. Saddam had no nuclear program. He had no stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction. The Iraq Survey Group basically nailed the door shut on the administration's justification for the war. But the President won't hear it. He stubbornly clings to his fiction that "there was a real risk that Saddam Hussein would pass weapons or materials or information to terrorist networks."

President Bush says JOHN KERRY "would weaken America and make the world more dangerous." In fact, it is

President Bush who has weakened America and made the world more dangerous. Let's count the ways George Bush's war has not made America safer.

No. 1, Iraq has been a constant perilous distraction from the real war on terrorism. There was no persuasive link between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaida. We should have finished the job in Afghanistan, finished the job on al-Qaida, and finished the job on Osama bin Laden.

No. 2, the mismanagement of the war in Iraq has created a fertile, new, and very dangerous breeding ground for terrorists in Iraq and a powerful recruiting tool for al-Qaida that did not exist before the war. We cannot go a day now without hearing of attacks in Iraq by insurgents and al-Qaida terrorists, and our troops are in far greater danger because of it.

Only this week, Ambassador Paul Bremer specifically stated that the Bush administration erred in not deploying enough troops in Iraq and not containing the violence and looting immediately after the fall of Saddam Hussein. About the looting, he said:

We paid a big price for not stopping it because it established an atmosphere of lawlessness.

He said:

We never had enough troops on the ground.

No. 3, Saddam may be behind bars, and that is a plus for America and the world, as President Bush says. But the war in Iraq has clearly distracted us from putting Osama bin Laden behind bars, and that is a huge minus.

No. 4, because of the war in Iraq, the danger of terrorist attacks against America itself has become far greater. Our preoccupation with Iraq has given al-Qaida more than 2 full years to regroup and plan murderous new assaults against us. And we know that al-Qaida will try to attack America again and again here at home, if it possibly can. Yet instead of staying focused on the real war on terror, President Bush rushed headlong into an unnecessary war in Iraq.

No. 5, and most ominously, the Bush administration's focus on Iraq has left us needlessly more vulnerable to an al-Qaida attack with a nuclear weapon. The greatest threat of all to our homeland is a nuclear attack. A mushroom cloud over any American city is the ultimate nightmare, and the risk is all too great. Osama bin Laden calls the acquisition of a nuclear device a "religious duty." Documents captured from a key al-Qaida aide 3 years ago revealed plans even then to smuggle high-grade radioactive materials into the United States in shipping containers.

No. 6, the war in Iraq has provided a powerful new worldwide recruiting tool for al-Qaida. We know al-Qaida is getting stronger, because its attacks in other parts of the world are increasing.

No. 7, because of the war, Afghanistan itself is still unstable. Taliban and al-Qaida elements continue to attack

our forces regularly. President Hamid Karzai is frequently forced to negotiate with warlords who control private armies in the tens of thousands. Opium production is at a record level, and is being used to finance terrorism and fund private militias. Our troops there are in greater danger.

No. 8, we have alienated long-time friends and leaders in other nations who heavily depend on for intelligence, for apprehending terrorists, for shutting off funds to al-Qaida, and for many other types of support in the ongoing war against international terrorism. Mistrust of America has soared throughout the world. We are especially hated in the Muslim world. In parts of it, the bottom has fallen out.

Sadly, we remember the goodwill that flowed to America in the aftermath of September 11, and we know we should never have squandered it.

No. 9, our overall military forces are stretched to the breaking point because of the war in Iraq. As the Defense Science Board recently told Secretary Rumsfeld:

Current and projected force structure will not sustain our current and projected global stabilization commitments.

LTG John Riggs said it clearly:

I have been in the Army 39 years, and I've never seen the Army as stretched in that 39 years as I have today.

And as our colleague Senator McCAIN warned last month, if we have a problem in some other flash point in the world:

It's clear, at least to most observers, that we don't have sufficient personnel.

No. 10, the war in Iraq has undermined the basic rule of international law that protects captured Americans. The Geneva Conventions are supposed to protect our forces, but the brutal interrogation techniques used at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq have lowered the bar for treatment of POWs and endangered our soldiers throughout the world.

No. 11, while President Bush has been preoccupied with Iraq, not just one but two serious nuclear threats have been rising: North Korea and Iran. Four years ago, North Korea's plutonium program was inactive. Its nuclear rods were under seal. Two years ago, as the Iraq debate became intense, North Korea expelled the international inspectors and began turning its fuel rods into nuclear weapons. At the beginning of the Bush administration, North Korea was already thought to have two such weapons. Now they may have eight, and the danger is greater.

Iran too is now on a faster track that could produce nuclear weapons. The international community might be more willing to act if President Bush had not abused the U.N. resolution on Iraq 2 years ago, when he took the words "serious consequences" as a license for launching his unilateral war in Iraq.

No. 12, while we focused on the non-existent nuclear threat from Saddam, we have not done enough to safeguard

the vast amounts of unsecured nuclear materials elsewhere in the world. According to a joint report by the Nuclear Threat Initiative and Harvard's Managing the Atom Project, "scores of nuclear terrorist opportunities lie in wait in countries all around the world," especially at sites in the former Soviet Union. How loudly does the alarm bell have to ring before President Bush wakes up?

No. 13, the neglect of the Bush administration on all aspects of homeland security because of the war is frightening. We are pouring nearly \$5 billion a month into Iraq, yet we are grossly shortchanging the urgent needs to strengthen our ability to prevent terrorist attacks here at home and to strengthen our preparedness should they occur.

As former Republican Senator Warren Rudman, chairman of the Independent Task Force on Emergency Responders, said recently:

Homeland security is terribly under-funded, and we cannot allow that to continue.

You cannot pack all these reasons why America is not safer into a 30-second television response ad or a news story or an editorial. But as anyone who cares about the issue can quickly learn, our President has utterly no credibility when he keeps telling us that America and the world are safer because he went to war in Iraq and rid us of Saddam.

President Bush's record on Iraq is clearly costing American lives and endangering America and the world. Our President will not change or even admit how wrong he has been and still is. Despite the long line of mistakes and blunders and outright deception, there has been no accountability. As election day grows closer, the buck is circling more and more closely over 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Only a new President can right the extraordinary wrongs of the Bush administration on our foreign policy and national security.

On November 2, when we ask ourselves the fundamental question whether President Bush has made us safer, there can be only one answer: No, he has not. That is why America needs new leadership. We could have been, and should have been, much safer than we are today.

We cannot afford to stay this very dangerous course. As I have said before, the only thing America has to fear is 4 more years of George Bush.

I withhold the remainder of the time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MURKOWSKI). Without objection, the remainder of the time is reserved.

The Senator from Iowa.

MEDICARE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, just over 10 months ago, we passed a bipartisan bill called the Medicare Modernization Act dealing more with the prescription drug issue than anything else. But regardless of what you want

to call it, it is the most sweeping improvement in Medicare since its creation. The Medicare Modernization Act delivered on a promise, a promise to provide beneficiaries a much needed prescription drug benefit and to revitalize Medicare so beneficiaries can receive quality care and benefits into the future with no sunset.

The Medicare bill passed with the support of a bipartisan coalition and more than 300 organizations ranging from the AARP to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Advocacy groups that did not necessarily support the bill then went on to form an organization called the Access to Benefits Coalition. They worked after passage of the MMA to ensure that low-income beneficiaries enroll in the Medicare drug card and get the real assistance to which every senior is entitled.

Still, on the floor of the Senate, we hear partisan attacks against this Medicare bill, continuing yet 10 months since it was signed into law. This is much to the consternation of organizations such as the Access to Benefits Coalition, which is saying that partisanship ought to be set aside and we ought to concentrate on getting people into the benefits that are in the program, even if you don't necessarily agree with the legislation.

Week after week, month after month, we have heard attack after attack against this Medicare bill. This is despite the fact that study after study shows the drug card program, for example—and that is only a small part of this most comprehensive improvement in Medicare in its 38-year history—is delivering real savings to beneficiaries.

As I listen to these attacks, I am reminded that it is always easier to tear down than to build. But if you tear something down, it seems to me those tearing it down ought to have something to replace it. So what was their plan? I haven't heard about a plan for the future, so I have to look back. What were they suggesting at that time when they had an alternative plan? And this was when the Democratic Party controlled the Senate. They did have a plan to offer, but the Democratic leader bypassed the Finance Committee, where we developed bipartisanship, to bring their proposal to the floor because they didn't want a bipartisan program. They wanted their own program. They knew they couldn't get their own program. They wanted an issue for the 2002 election rather than a product.

This alternative was drafted by Senator GRAHAM and Senator KENNEDY. Their bill was S. 2625. It had 30 Democratic cosponsors, including the Democratic leader. They offered two proposals as amendments on the Senate floor. Fifty Democrats voted in favor of the first proposal. Forty-five Democrats supported the second, which, I might add, was worse than the first. The Democratic Leader as well as Senator KENNEDY and Senator KERRY supported both of these Democratic proposals.