

later. I don't know if the Senator is wishing to close this body this evening? I am waiting for him to do so.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

TRIBUTE TO PAT TILLMAN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, in November of 1864, when the "awful universe of battle" raged across America, President Abraham Lincoln paused to write a letter to one Mrs. Bixby, the mother of five sons serving in the Civil War.

Dear Madame, I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle.

I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine that should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming.

But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save.

I pray our heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

In the face of tragic death, it is beyond my capacity to conceive of the words that could justify the cause of freedom.

Yet with President Lincoln's words of 140 years ago, I cannot conceive of any better words to consecrate the cause of freedom in the face of such tragedy.

As long as freedom last, these words are immortal.

Every President and every leader in the free world since who has had to call upon their soldiers to defend freedom knows of Abe Lincoln's letter to widow Bixby.

Upon hearing of the death in combat of any of our fine young men and women in uniform, all leaders of freedom have searched for the right words and likely returned to those used by the Great Emancipator almost a century and a half ago for inspiration.

Eleven days ago, another costly sacrifice was laid upon the altar of freedom.

Today the people of San Jose, CA will gather to remember one of their honored fallen.

Pat Tillman was no different than any other soldier who served. Those who survive Pat Tillman grieve no differently than the survivors of any other soldier killed in freedom's cause.

Yet Pat Tillman embodies to a Nation the honor and duty of all those who serve in uniform.

Not every soldier is like Pat Tillman, but in each soldier, we find a little of the likes of Pat Tillman.

In my home state of Kentucky, the sacrifice for freedom is real and painful with the loss of too many fine young men.

On April 7, Staff Sergeant George S. Rentschler, 31, of Louisville was lost in action with the 1st Armored Division in Baghdad.

Marine Corporal Nicholas Dieruf, 21, of Lexington was killed in action in Husaybah on April 8.

Sergeant Major Michael B. Stack, 48, of Fort Campbell, serving with the 5th Special Forces Group was lost on April 11 in the al Anbar Province.

And 1st Lieutenant Robert L. Henderson II, 33, of Alvaton, serving with the Kentucky National Guard was killed in Diwaniyah on April 17.

Each of these heroes volunteered knowing that one day they might be called upon for the ultimate sacrifice for freedom.

Like Sergeant Rentschler, Corporal Dieruf, Sergeant Major Stack and Lieutenant Henderson, Pat Tillman heard the call and paid the sacrifice.

With our fallen Kentucky natives, he joins that band of brothers, that noble breed of volunteer militia who so long ago picked up the musket so that freedom might find one sanctuary here on Earth.

Where his forefathers put down their hoe in a cornfield, he put down his helmet on a football field and walked onto the battlefield of freedom.

In dedicating the final resting place of those who died at Gettysburg, President Lincoln stated

But in a large sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract.

President Lincoln concluded:

It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave their last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this Nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.

Mr. President, the sacrifice of Pat Tillman—like all those who serve and perish in our Nation's duty, has consecrated the cause of freedom far greater than our words could ever do.

From the last full measure of devotion he gave for a new birth of freedom, it is we who must dedicate ourselves to the unfinished business of government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

THE PROPER ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN IRAQ

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, for many months the President's critics have asserted the situation in Iraq would improve if only the administra-

tion would cede control over the reconstruction and democratization of Iraq to the United Nations.

While the presumptive Democratic nominee, Senator Kerry, has yet to offer a detailed plan for Iraq, he has made it abundantly clear it involves transferring a significant measure of authority to the U.N. In fact, on December 3rd of last year, he noted:

Our best option for success is to go back to the United Nations and leave no doubt that we are prepared to put the United Nations in charge of the reconstruction and governance-building processes. I believe the prospects for success on the ground will be far greater if Ambassador Bremer and the Coalition Provisional Authority are replaced by a U.N. Special Representative for Iraq.

The U.N. is an immensely valuable organization, and America's significant contributions to the U.N. are a worthwhile investment. The U.N. is often the only entity that can bring international humanitarian relief to needy and impoverished societies across the globe, and its employees and volunteers deserve the highest praise for their selfless acts to bring comfort to the downtrodden.

When civil authorities in dysfunctional states collapse, the U.N. has sometimes averted humanitarian disaster. It can bring relief to failed states in isolated backwaters of the world where the major powers are unlikely to intervene themselves.

The U.N. in such cases plays a critical role and deserves our support for its important efforts. But the United Nations is not a blue-helmeted knight here to slay the dragons of aggression and evil. When the stakes are high and the threat of violence is real, the United States is too often helpless in the face of danger.

Before I turn my attention to the specific reason that Americans should be wary of abandoning Iraq to the United Nations, let me dispel a myth about the administration's foreign policy.

The President's critics often refer to America's efforts in Iraq as unilateralist. This politically expedient fix is an insult to the thousands of men and women from the 30-plus countries who are risking their lives to bring peace and democracy to the people of Iraq. If the President's critics still believe his policy to be a go-it-alone approach, let them repeat that assertion to the families of the Italian, Spanish, Polish, British, Danish, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Thai, Estonian, South Korean, Japanese, and Salvadoran soldiers and aid workers who have given their lives in Iraq.

Some say United Nations oversight in Iraq would confer legitimacy to the coalition's occupation and reconstruction of that country. I find that hard to believe. Given its role in sustaining the Saddam Hussein regime via the alleged mismanagement of the Oil for Food Program and the refusal to enforce its own resolutions, the United Nations is not in a position to lend legitimacy to a free Iraq. In fact, I think it could be

argued it would take away legitimacy from a free Iraq. The only thing that can confer legitimacy in Iraq is a series of national elections. However, these elections must not occur too soon as democracy cannot be turned on at the flip of a switch. But they will come in due time. If we stay the course, by December of next year the Iraqis will likely elect the most representative government in the Arab world.

I might say to put that in context it was 12 years between the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution being adopted.

So the Iraqis will have gone from liberation to election in under 1,000 days and even though we have 24-hour television these days, that is still a remarkably fast evolution from dictatorship, brutal dictatorship to representative government.

The Oil for Food scandal highlights another reason we should not rush to put the United Nations in charge of Iraq's reconstruction. Although we do not yet know the full story, we can draw some initial lessons.

First, an organization that apparently so mismanaged the Oil for Food Program cannot be trusted to manage a \$34 billion budget for Iraqi reconstruction.

Second, the alleged corruption of some United Nations officials and member states raises a serious concern about the U.N.'s commitment to its stated mission. Instead of sanctioning Saddam Hussein's regime, a number of United Nations officials and foreign diplomats may have used the Oil for Food Program as a slush fund to enrich themselves while allowing profits and goods to be diverted away from needy Iraqis and toward the Saddam Hussein regime.

Free Iraqis have ample reason to be wary of entrusting their future to those who allegedly had no qualms about doing illicit business with their oppressor.

United Nations control will not stop the violence in Iraq. Quite frankly, the United Nations is not capable of managing the security situation in Iraq. Terrorists do not respect blue-helmeted peacekeepers because the U.N. has proven itself to lack either the fire-power or the will to quell violent uprisings. In Somalia, when Aidid's thugs took to the streets, United Nations peacekeepers stayed in camp while American troops fought to restore order.

How can we expect United Nations forces that fled from Somalia's untrained gangs to confront the professional fedayeen and suicidal radicals behind this insurgency in Iraq? Few seriously believe the U.N. can be trusted to provide security for the Iraqi people. Indeed, the United Nations has demonstrated its inability to provide security even for itself. The U.N.'s own scathing report on the bombing of its headquarters in Baghdad last summer documented the culture of complacency and poor planning within the

U.N.'s security forces. The United Nations has already cut and run in Iraq in the wake of the August bombings of its headquarters. How can the Iraqis trust the U.N. not to abandon them yet again to the lawless insurgents who seek to derail the democratic process?

There is a further problem subjugating American foreign policy authority to the United Nations Security Council. The veto-wielding permanent members of the security council were chosen because they were simply the world's major powers at the time the United Nations was established. It therefore does not accurately reflect the distribution of world power today, and its composition discriminates against the current major powers that share principles of democracy and of freedom.

For example, Communist China is a permanent member, but democratic Japan, the world's second largest economy, is not. Newly democratic Russia is a member, but neither Canada nor Spain, democracies with twice the size of Russia's economy, is a member; nor is Italy, with an economy four times as large as that of Russia; nor is India, the world's largest democracy.

Even France, although democratic, often has different strategic and political interests than the United States. As evidenced by the Oil for Food scandal, it is possible that France, sometimes a more zealous competitor than an ally, had a significant financial stake in the continuation of the Saddam Hussein regime.

When the security council deliberates, there are often too many cooks in the kitchen and all of them have different tastes.

If the United Nations takes a larger role in Iraq, so too will the general assembly. I am not convinced that will be a good thing. There are, to be sure, responsible nations in the general assembly but, frankly, they are few and very far between.

The irony that so many authoritarian regimes are represented in such a democratic body is often lost on American politicians who so desperately seek approval of our foreign policy from this very body. The general assembly, in fact, provides funds for despotic member states to pour sand onto the clogs of international peace and stability. These regimes are unremittably hostile to the United States and to democracy, and they will continue to exploit their authority at the U.N. to halt freedom's progress.

Sudan, Syria, and Iran did not oppose the liberation of Iraq because they wanted to peacefully resolve the growing international crisis. They opposed the war because they didn't want to see a precedent whereby their own tyrannies could be undermined.

The ability of rogue states to thwart the U.N.'s efforts to do the right thing is exemplified by the United Nations Human Rights Commission whose members include—listen to this, the United Nations Human Rights Commis-

sion whose members include Cuba, China, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan, among others.

Joanna Weschler of Human Rights Watch has called the commission a rogue's gallery of human rights abusers—that is the Commission on Human Rights at the United Nations—and correctly noted "an abusive country cannot honestly pass judgment on other abusive countries."

So does Senator KERRY really want to give these nations a say in Iraq's future? Does he expect them to share America's interest in a free and stable Iraq, even though a democratic Iraq would undermine their own authoritarian rule? Why do some American politicians want the fox to guard the henhouse?

If the President's critics still believe that authority in Iraq should be transferred to the U.N., then we should have waited for the United Nations' approval before liberating Iraq. Let them explain to the American people why they have such trust in the UN.

Let them explain why China, France, or Russia deserves a veto over U.S. foreign policy.

Let them explain why the very countries that allegedly negotiated clandestine oil leases with Saddam Hussein deserve a say in the reconstruction of Iraq.

Let them explain how an organization that cannot manage its own finances deserves to manage those of the Iraqis.

Let them explain why an organization that cannot provide for its own security should be entrusted with stabilizing Iraq. There are many things the United Nations can do well, but I don't believe managing Iraq's fragile transition to democracy is one of them. I wish the United Nations could be helpful on issues that are critical to American security, but it is unsuited to that mission.

I support the United Nations. I hope it can reform itself and prevent the worst abusers of human rights from sabotaging its laudable efforts to protect the rights and dignity of mankind. I want the United Nations to play a role in Iraq's reconstruction, and I hope it will send humanitarian teams and election monitors to assist in building democracy on the ruins of tyranny.

But the United Nations is not a collective security organization, and it cannot replace America as a defender of liberty and democracy in conflicts that are important to American security because too many of its Members share neither our principles nor our interests.

Entrusting democracy in Iraq to the blue-helmeted bureaucrats at the United Nations is not a plan, it is a fantasy.

Mr. REID. If the Senator will yield the floor for me to make a couple of statements.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. First of all, Mr. President, the quote the Senator from Kentucky gave of Abraham Lincoln is one of my favorites. I have a little book called "A Book of 100 Poems." In that book, in addition to the poem, is the letter President Lincoln wrote to Mrs. Bixby. It is not a poem but is as beautiful as any poem written.

I have, over the years, taken those words, "assuage the anguish of your bereavement" and I have used that phrase in letters that I write to many people who have suffered deaths in their families.

I say to my friend from Kentucky, that is a beautiful letter that President Lincoln wrote. In my "Book of 100 Poems," the letter is copied that he wrote in hand to Mrs. Bixby.

I appreciate the Senator reading that most magnificent letter, the words of President Lincoln.

Of course, talking about Pat Tillman makes everyone understand a little better the sacrifices being made in Iraq.

In response to my friend from Kentucky, the distinguished assistant Republican leader, in the first war, I voted for it. I was the first Democrat to announce it publicly. For the first President Bush's excursion into Iraq, over 90 percent of the costs of that war were borne by other countries. The casualties were not all U.S. casualties in that first war.

In this war, more than 90 percent of the costs of the war are borne by American taxpayers. More than 95 percent of the casualties in Iraq are Americans. That number is now approaching 800. Twenty-one Americans were killed on Saturday and Sunday in Iraq.

My friend, the senior Senator from Kentucky, talks disparagingly—whether he means to or not—about the United Nations. The President cannot have it both ways. At his press conference he was asked what his plan was. He said he was waiting to hear from the envoy of the United Nations in Iraq. He and his administration continually refers to Brahimi as a person who is beginning to bring some degree of stability to the plan.

The reason the President answered the question that way is the United Nations brings some sense of legitimacy to what is going on there. More importantly than that, if the plan goes forward as some anticipate, there would be others coming to help. It would take the burden off of the U.S. taxpayer and especially the men and women of our armed services.

We are bearing a tremendous burden, not only with our Regular Army, Navy, and Air Force but with our Reserve Forces, a tremendous burden on our Reserve and Guard. Those, including the President, obviously, who refer to Mr. Brahimi are thinking about the need to cut some slack there to the United States.

The United Nations is an organization we helped create. We are the largest donor to that organization. It is an

imperfect organization, I would be the first to recognize that. However, it must play a role. It is one of the only ways that I can see that we can move forward with more of the support of the American people, which is being lost.

I voted for the resolution to go to Iraq the first time—you have already heard me say that—and the second time. We cannot cut and run in Iraq. We have to do what we have to do to bring stability to that very unstable part of the world.

However, let's not run down the United Nations. We need them to help bring in others so we do not bear 95 percent of the casualties and more than 90 percent of the costs of what is going on there. There are other countries there and I appreciate them being there, but as far as numbers of troops, we have 135,000 troops; the British have 10,000. The next largest contingency of troops we have is hired security guards. We need to do better than what we are doing in Iraq. This is not in any way to take away from the valor of the men and women serving in that country.

Just last night, somebody lobbed a mortar shell into a military compound there. The soldiers are running around thinking that is all of it and in comes another one and kills five or six of them. These soldiers, these servicemen of ours serving in Iraq, every minute of every day are fearing for their lives, whether they are carrying a gun or driving a truck. We need to have this matter resolved in a way that is not happening now.

I cannot give a blueprint of what needs to be done, but I am grateful the President is recognizing Mr. Brahimi can do some good there. That may not be the only answer, but it is an answer. I hope we can move forward in this matter and bring peace and stability to an area that needs it. I recognize if we could bring peace and stability to Iraq, it would help the whole Middle East. If we could help establish a democracy in Iraq, it would add to the democracy we already have in that area, Israel. It could set a system where other countries would have to focus on how they treat their people. I am all in favor of our bringing about a better situation in Iraq than certainly existed under the regime of Saddam Hussein.

I appreciate the comments of my colleague from Kentucky. I know his heart is in the right place. Hopefully, we can join in moving forward on this most important issue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I had not come to the floor to debate my good friend from Nevada, but let me add a couple of words before we adjourn.

I certainly agree with him, we need more forces in Iraq. Where they need to come from is from the Iraqi people. General Petraeus, the Commander of the famed 101st Airborne who took that unit into Iraq and stationed it in

northern Iraq around Mosul for about a year, has now been given his next assignment. His next assignment is to go back to Iraq—and he is there now—to help the Iraqi people develop a military that can deal with the threat.

In the end, the area will be secure only if the Iraqi military and Iraqi police have both the skill and the desire to protect their country from these terrorists.

So, far from hoping we will get additional troops from around the world, even though we have 20,000 troops there from other countries now, the key to additional military in Iraq is in Iraq itself—Iraqi soldiers, well trained, fighting for their own country. And that training is well underway under the skilled leadership of General Petraeus.

With regard to the U.N., I readily concede there are a few things they can do well. They can put on elections. They can hand out humanitarian aid. But they do not have an army. And they are discredited in Iraq because of their involvement in the oil-for-food scandal which robbed Iraqis, for 10 years, of the opportunity to eat while this deal was enriching Saddam Hussein and his henchmen.

So the U.N. does not have a great reputation in Iraq, with good reason. We hope the U.N. will be able to play a useful role in moving Iraq from where it is today to a representative government, where it will be by the end of 2005.

SPACE DAY 2004

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate Mervin Iverson Elementary School's Erin Berkey, Sarah Boyer, and Carissa Buckley on their selection as one of the 18 Stellar Design Challenges teams for Space Day 2004. I also want to recognize their teacher Katheryn Grimes for her strong instruction and guidance of the student team.

Space Day is an international celebration of the accomplishments and opportunities of space exploration aimed at promoting student interest in math, science, and technology. It reaches hundreds of thousands of teachers and millions of students around the world.

Developed by the Challenger Center for Space Science Education, Design Challenges is a national competition that encourages students to create innovative solutions to the challenges of space exploration. The 18 Stellar Design Challenges teams were selected from more than 300 teams who participated in the competition.

The Iverson Elementary School team designed a tool to help explorers on Europa, one of Jupiter's moons. The tool is designed to drill into ice ridges on Europa that have already been discovered by the NASA spacecraft Galileo.

The remotely operated tool would also collect samples of ice and water, analyze their chemical compositions, measure temperatures of the surface