

a new initiative connected to the EU and leave NATO hollow, that would have a serious negative impact on America's commitment to NATO—and it certainly would to this Senator's commitment to NATO. There was just quiet when I responded in that fashion.

The French reporter who was making this report about the new European defense initiative noted how critically poor America was at peacekeeping, and what a poor job we do at rebuilding a country. I never thought that was true with Japan or Germany.

Then a Brit responded to him. She said she had recently been in Bosnia and it is fact that NATO is going to turn over its operational responsibilities in Bosnia to this European force. She said she heard the Kosovars said, We don't trust the EU, we trust the Americans, which certainly flies in the face of the charge that we are no good at peacekeeping. I thanked her for noting what I did not have to say. The Kosovars and the Albanians believed their freedom came from American efforts—not European Union efforts.

Those are the bad things. Let me tell you about the ugly things.

When I left on Sunday to fly home, I reflected upon 9/11 and the article V guarantee that had been issued and how the European Union had not been able to, or our members in Europe had not been able to, fulfill their Afghan responsibilities. I thought about how unfair it was to mothers of American troops, and we as a government have said credibly so that Estonians can talk to Russians as equals that if they are attacked we will go to war—thermonuclear war, if necessary. But if the United States is attacked, the response in Afghanistan—a NATO commitment—has been we will apply defense for ourselves, and we will fall short of fulfilling our promises.

That is the first ugly thing—the first ugly realization I left with.

The second was this: I heard from country after country in Central and Eastern Europe how they were being pressured as new members of the European Union not to be cooperative with America on security issues.

That makes me angry. I think that is really ugly.

I was reminded of the Commissar about a year ago when these new NATO members put an article in the Wall Street Journal saying they stood with America on the war on terrorism and the President of the French Republic fearing these new countries would be a Trojan horse for the Americans and a challenge to the Franco-German leadership of Europe that was opposing the American effort—that somehow they had not acted “well-born.” Those are his words.

He went on to add, warning: I was sad to learn, that is being administered in subtle but powerful ways to these new EU members. He said it could cost them membership in the EU. It has not done that.

Then Chirac said:

Beyond the somewhat amusing or childish aspects of the matter [the matter being the letter of support in the Wall Street Journal] . . . it was dangerous. It should not be forgotten that a number of the EU countries will have to ratify enlargement by referendum. And we already know that public opinion, as always when it's a matter of something new, have reservations about an enlargement, not really seeing exactly what their interest is in approving it. Obviously, then, [what the central Europeans have done] can only reinforce hostile public opinion sentiments among the 15 and especially those who will hold a referendum. Remember that all it takes is for one country not to ratify the referendum for [enlargement] not to happen. Thus, I would say that these countries have been, let's be frank, both not very well brought up and rather unconscious about the dangers that too quick an alignment with the American position could have for them.

I conclude with the words of Edmund Burke, that nations have no permanent friends, only permanent interests. I also remember the words of Isaiah to ancient Israel, not to lean on a weak reed.

I say to the American people, NATO is not dead, but it is in trouble. As politicians promise you relief through internationalization, I ask the American people to consider reality, deeds, not words and empty budgets.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I will use leader time this morning to comment about a number of matters.

I return, as most Members have, from our home States, and I feel a new sense of optimism about what we can accomplish in America for the remaining months of this Congress.

I had the opportunity to visit with South Dakotans of all ages when I was home. I was reminded during those conversations of the hope and resilience that characterize Americans, even in difficult times. The people I talked with spoke frankly about the serious challenges we are facing, but they also expressed a belief that together we can overcome those challenges. And they are right. Their sense of resolve is a great reminder for us all.

When we left Washington for Memorial Day recess, the Senate had ended 5 weeks of procedural wrangling that left many of us frustrated. We accomplished much less than we should have in those 5 weeks. What we did accomplish, though important, took far too long. Remarkably, when we finally did reach agreement on a couple of key issues, some influential voices actually complained. Why? Because bipartisan progress does not suit their political strategy. They would actually prefer Congress do nothing between now and November because they want to blame Democrats for inaction.

When we left for the recess, I was seriously concerned that such political gamesmanship in the Senate could result in a lot of name-calling and finger-pointing this summer but very little progress for the American people. We owe our country more than that.

On Memorial Day, I spoke at a ceremony at a veterans cemetery in my hometown where my father is buried. There were veterans there from my father's war, World War II, from Vietnam, Korea, and the Persian Gulf conflict. There were guests who have friends and family members today serving in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Yesterday I spoke to about 500 young men who were attending Boys State in South Dakota. This is the 35th anniversary of my own week at Boys State. The young men who are part of Boys State this weekend are among the best and brightest in my State. They are there because they are natural leaders. They care deeply about the future of our country. Some of them will no doubt join the military. From the oldest veterans at the cemetery to the youngest delegates at Boys State, the people I talked with at home reminded me Americans have always done what was needed to be done to make a better future.

Congress can do the same now. These are difficult times economically for the middle class. The last time we found ourselves in the situation like this was in 1992. Then, as now, the monthly bills were getting bigger but wages were not keeping up. Then, as now, we were told the economy was getting better. But whatever “recovery” there was did not seem to be reaching the middle class. Then, as now, there was a feeling that leadership was out of touch with what was going on in most of America.

But then, over the next few years, the leadership in Washington, our Government, started putting the interests of the Nation ahead of special interests. We focused on creating jobs and reducing crime and balancing the budget. With the help of the American people we did all three.

Between 1992 and 2000, 22 million new jobs were created. We lowered the crime rate and turned record deficits into surpluses. We restored strength to America's economy and strengthened America's leadership position in the world. We worked with our allies and NATO to confront a ruthless dictator in Europe who was engaged in ethnic cleansing and ended his brutal reign. A victory in Kosovo proved how successful we can be with our friends when we work together and share the burden confronting global threats.

The situation today may be a little tougher and the solutions may be more complex, especially on the international front, but the fundamental truth remains. Americans still know we can work our way out of this. That is the sentiment I heard back in South Dakota. We have done it before; we can do it again.

I am confident the American people will rise to the challenges of today as

well. And we need to meet those challenges with them. We must make the needs of hard-working Americans a higher priority than passing more tax breaks. Congress must put the well-being of patients ahead of the profits of HMOs and drug companies so we can finally address the health care crisis in a meaningful way. We must return to a foreign policy that recognizes the value of listening to military leaders and working with all of our allies.

These are commitments the American people want from this Congress. In recent weeks, we have gotten a glimpse of what we can accomplish if we put aside politics and focus on the larger task at hand.

Two weeks ago, for example, we had a promising bipartisan development regarding the transportation bill. After several disappointing experiences with conference processes last year, we have reached a good-faith agreement on how we can proceed with the transportation conference. I am hopeful we can get a good bill to the President soon.

There are some people who think Congress should do little or nothing more of any consequence before we adjourn in October. They see political advantage in gridlock. We need to reject cynical calculations such as these. Doing nothing may be good for some people's political campaigns, but it does not do good for America. It is not good for the millions of middle-class families looking to Congress for help with real and every-day needs. We cannot wait until the new Congress is sworn in next January. We need to be working together now.

Last week I participated in my fourth annual Technology Summit, which has become now an annual event in Sioux Falls. Bill Gates and other technology industry leaders spoke. About 1,000 people came to hear how new discoveries in science and technology can help solve even the most seemingly intractable problems.

One of the people at that summit was a brilliant 29-year-old neuroscience researcher who got his Ph.D. at the University of South Dakota and is doing breakthrough work unlocking the secrets of the human mind. If he can learn how the human mind works, surely we can find a way in this Senate to work together on the challenges facing America.

If young people are willing to go to war for America, surely we can agree to call a political truce in the Senate for at least the next several months so we can deal with some of the real problems facing middle-class families.

As my fellow South Dakotans reminded me over and over again last week, we have met the challenge of difficult times before. Together we must do so again.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NATIONAL GUARD

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, as we are waiting for some of the deliberations on the Department of Defense authorization bill, I thought it might be worthwhile to call to the attention of the Senate an amendment I will be offering at a later time having to do with our National Guard.

The National Guard has performed magnificently, heroically, and with great professional skill, as well as patriotism. When I wore the uniform of this country as a member of the U.S. Army Active-Duty back in the late 1960s, the National Guard was a much different creature. Today, as the Presiding Officer so well knows, the National Guard is, in many cases, as skilled as, if not even more skilled in particular skills, the regular Army. Thus, when we encounter a threat to the interests of the United States and have to respond abroad, as we have both in Afghanistan and Iraq—especially in Iraq but before that in the Balkans—the National Guard is called on to supply so many of those troops.

My wife and I make it a point on holidays such as Thanksgiving to have Thanksgiving dinner with troops in different parts of the world. One time we found ourselves with our troops in Bosnia. At that particular point in one of those camps out in the fields where we had that Thanksgiving dinner, of that entire U.S. military force, which was our ninth year in Bosnia helping stabilize that place from the fratricide and killing that occurred there before, lo and behold, who were those troops? Those troops were the National Guard. In that particular case, it was the National Guard unit from Pennsylvania. They knew they had a 6-month tour of duty and then they would go home—remember, the National Guard members have their civilian jobs, and what they signed up for also encompasses if there is an emergency in their State, they are under the control of their Governor.

Now we find that we have entered a new era in which we are stretched to the limit on our regular Army troops and almost as if it is an expected thing of replacing regular Army with National Guard. Of course, something is going to have to change, and I think the head of the National Guard and the head of the Reserves are addressing this because they are quite concerned that over time, they are going to see people not reenlisting in the Reserves and the Guard, and in order to compensate for that and encourage that, I think we are going to see our military leadership is going to be setting forth an agenda where Guard and Reserves would have a more certain anticipation that within a period of years, say, 4

years, they would serve a number of months of active duty. I hope that is going to solve some of the problems; otherwise, people might be voting with their feet as they leave the National Guard.

The thrust of my remarks is to tell about when the National Guard is activated, as it has been very heroically from my State—the Florida National Guard was, in fact, in Iraq before the war started. We went in there with special operations troops, and they have performed magnificently. Initially, they thought they were going for 6 months. Then they understood 12 months. But in some cases, they were extended to 14 and 15 months.

So in those long deployments, what happens back home? The families are anxious naturally. The families are usually without the primary breadwinner in the family. The families—the remaining spouses and the children—are often facing a new kind of not only emotional problems but financial problems, not even to speak of the question of the financial situation facing the employer back home.

What should we do? Talk to any National Guard commander and he will tell you that a most important support for those families is the Family Assistance Centers. We have them all over the country. They did not used to get nearly the attention they do today because when fully implemented, when fully funded, when giving the attention to the families back home while their loved ones are abroad, they are giving them counseling, they are helping them get proper counseling on financial management, and they are serving as a center point for networking among the other National Guard families while their loved ones are deployed overseas.

Thus, last year, when we had this very same bill on the Senate floor, the Department of Defense authorization, I offered an amendment, and it was accepted, providing \$10 million for these Family Assistance Centers. This is \$10 million out of a \$400 billion-plus DOD authorization bill. It was accepted. A lot of that \$10 million has not been allocated in the last year. Lo and behold, we are seeing some resistance to doing the same thing.

I wanted to give notice to the Senate that coming up will be my amendment authorizing \$10 million for Family Assistance Centers for our National Guard families at home. It is one of the least things we can do because it has been so effective. It has been so effective over the course of the past year. But right now, they are anticipating that they are not going to have those resources because they are not in the National Guard budget. I want to make sure it is going to be in the National Guard budget.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.