

Let me turn to the Democratic leader on anything on the schedule before I make a very brief statement.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

AMBASSADOR NEGROPONTE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, my staff received a telephone call this morning, less than an hour ago, indicating Ambassador Negroponte would not be coming today because the leader or his people indicated he shouldn't come.

We have these very important elections taking place in Iraq on October 15. This is an opportunity for Members to visit with Ambassador Negroponte, who is, if not the expert on what is going on in Iraq, certainly one of the two or three top people in the world to tell Members what is going on there. This briefing is open to all Senators, Democrats and Republicans. There certainly is no reason we should not be able to do that. It is an important oversight responsibility we have.

I hope the distinguished Republican leader has not been part of telling Negroponte and his people not to come up here for that briefing at 3 to 4 o'clock. I had a meeting this morning at 9 o'clock. I invited all Senators to come who were with me. We are going to have good attendance at that meeting. This is not a meeting in any way to do with anything other than find out what is going on. We have a responsibility to find out what is going on. I would like to have the Ambassador come often. I don't know why we can't go ahead with this briefing.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, with regard to a briefing which was initiated on a partisan basis by the other side of the aisle in spite of their knowledge that we do have an all-Senate briefing that is bipartisan in the tradition—we have had over 20 different briefings, including one very useful one last week, one the week prior to that. On a partisan basis, an all-Senate briefing was scheduled; a counteroffer was made. We already have a meeting scheduled with the Ambassador here in 2 to 3 weeks.

I will continue to work with the Democratic leader coming back and forth. These all-Senate briefings we have, which are on a classified basis, have proven to be a very useful vehicle for all Senators to participate, to be able to ask questions of various representatives, and is a very good model.

I will continue to work with the Democratic leader. As he knows, Ambassador Negroponte is coming in about 2½ or 3 weeks—I don't know exactly what that date is for that particular all-Senate briefing initiated on a bipartisan basis and not on a partisan basis, which this last meeting was.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I know the distinguished Republican leader has a

statement to make, but just on this subject, on a more personal basis, the Republican leader and I had a number of meetings the last several weeks, certainly the last few days, and this issue has never been raised.

I don't see how we can have too many briefings on what is going on in Iraq. Negroponte has simply not been here. I have the greatest respect for him, but in a briefing—in 2 or 3 weeks, the elections will have been over in Iraq. That is one of the reasons people are losing faith in what is going on in Iraq—because we do not have the information to convey to the people. The administration says just stay the course. We want information.

Negroponte, if he is told by the Republican leader not to come, he is not going to come. It is too bad. It is a perfect day for this. The Jewish holiday is still on. Most Members would have the opportunity to come here. Senator LIEBERMAN and a couple of others would not be able to, but we already have on my side about 20 Senators willing and wanting to come.

I am disappointed this will now have to become a political issue. It shouldn't. I like Negroponte. He is good. He is good for the country. I told the President personally that this was a great choice he made to lead this new intelligence agency.

There is no need to belabor the point other than to say I am terribly disappointed that my Senators—and anyone else on the other side of the aisle—want to come and listen to a presentation prior to the elections and now are going to be unable to have this briefing. That is too bad.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I am a bit offended when the Democratic leader knows last week we had defense, we had Generals Myers, Abizaid, and Casey brief Members extensively in a bipartisan way in a tradition we have set up that is working very well. We have the Secretary of State, which he knows, coming on October 19 to have a very similar briefing, addressing issues in Iraq, in Afghanistan. And Negroponte is coming, as I said, the following week.

So we will work together. I do want to make it clear their invitation was initiated in a partisan way, with a letter I was not a part of, not asked to be a part of, in the letter itself, the initial letter. I think we need to continue to work together to continue these briefings, which are very important, as we go forward.

ROSH HASHANAH

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I would like to comment on the Jewish holiday at this juncture, if I might.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the Jewish holiday of Rosh Hashanah and to reflect on the importance of Israel to the Jewish people and the United States.

Rosh Hashanah, also called the Jewish New Year, began Monday evening.

Jews all across the globe flocked to their synagogues, prepared ceremonial meals, and set aside special time with family to mark the occasion.

Rosh Hashanah celebrates the anniversary of the creation of the world. It is a time for contemplation and prayer, a day to look forward to the year ahead, to reflect on past deeds, and to ask for God's forgiveness.

Rosh Hashanah is followed by Yom Kippur, the most solemn occasion on the Jewish calendar. Beginning on the 10th day of Tishri—the evening of October 12—the Jewish people will observe a day of fasting, of prayer, and reflection. And as with every year, they will end the annual rite with the words: "Next Year in Jerusalem."

Israel, and the city of Jerusalem, a city that both major parties recognize as its capital, is the birthplace to three of the world's great religions. It is rich in tradition, history, and culture, all of which truly touches the soul.

From the mountains of the Golan to the port of Eilat, Israel's natural beauty is as diverse as the religions that share its golden city of Jerusalem.

A land of economic and scientific innovation, the mysticism of the past unites with technology of the future.

Perhaps most significantly, Israel is a symbol of the survival of the Jewish people. It shines as a beacon of hope to Jews all over the world, even as it stands surrounded by a sea of tyrannies.

And to the United States, this small and besieged country is a vital partner in the war on terror. The struggle it fights every day against terrorist forces, within and without its borders, is part of the same struggle our troops fight every day in Iraq and Afghanistan—the same struggle that rocked the island of Bali on Saturday.

Reasonable people can and should debate Israel's policies. Serious, thoughtful debate is crucial to devising effective and correct solutions. It is the cornerstone of democracy.

But we must always distinguish between those who raise legitimate questions about the specific policies of a democratic state and those who use criticism of Israel as a disguise for attacks on the Jewish people.

I urge all of my colleagues to reflect on the longstanding relationship, friendship, between the United States and Israel; to wish our ally peace and prosperity in the year ahead; and to work to strengthen, deepen, and improve our bond as defenders of freedom.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

RETIREMENT OF TIMOTHY SCOTT WINEMAN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, Timothy Wineman has worked for the Senate for 35 years. On September 28, the Senate noted the outstanding service of Tim by adopting S. Res. 258.

He has spent his entire 35 years of Senate service working in the Disbursing Office. That in itself is a commendable feat.

In 1970, Tim began his career as a payroll clerk and was promoted to payroll supervisor 6 years later. He continued to receive promotions and in 1998 became the Senate's financial clerk. Tim's career in the Disbursing Office has been stellar. You could always count on Tim and his staff for topnotch service and to accommodate Members and staff.

Tim and his wife Pat met in high school, got married, and have two children, Matthew and Lory. Matt and Lory have provided Tim and Pat with four grandchildren—two boys and two girls.

Tim plans to spend the first 6 months trying to get his sea legs, enjoying some "downtime" with his family and playing a little golf. He and Pat then plan to do some traveling. They want to go to Alaska to see what is happening there.

I salute Tim on his service to the Senate and congratulate him on a job well done. He certainly was part of the Senate family and always will be. I hope he enjoys his retirement.

IRAQ AND THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, let me say this. Ambassador Negroponte came to the Senate the last time this past May. Did he talk anything about what was going on with intelligence in Iraq or what was going on in Iraq, period? No. He talked about international terrorism. It is not as if we have been bothering the Ambassador having him come here all the time.

But I am disappointed to have to report to the American people this is what is going on with this administration: You never get to what the issue is. Put it off. Do not talk about it. Stay the course.

In Iraq we have some problems: almost 2,000 dead Americans; 15,000, 16,000 wounded, many of them very badly.

I in no way say this to disparage the managers of this bill, one of whom is a winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor, Senator DAN INOUE; the other served valiantly in World War II as a pilot. But their job would be much easier if they had a Defense authorization bill prior to coming here to this floor with an appropriations bill. It makes their job, if not impossible, extremely difficult.

Let me explain what I am talking about. You authorize funding in the Congress, and then it goes to the all-important Appropriations Committee, and they determine what of the authorization bill deserves money. That is basically what it amounts to. There has to be some limit to spending, and that is what the Appropriation Committee's job is; to determine whether the money should be spent.

Well, here there is no authorization bill. There is legislation in the author-

ization bill that deals with retirement pay for the military, with pay raises for the military, with all kinds of programs for the veterans, the National Guard and Reserve. The Appropriations Committee does not have the benefit of that. They will be working, in effect, on last year's law.

I do not know how we could ever—I am sure it has happened sometime in the far distant past. I am sure it has happened. I hope it does not happen in the future that they try to do this jury-rigged system, where you take an appropriations bill without having done an authorization bill.

There are matters in that authorization bill dealing with prisoner abuse. A number of people want to offer amendments. They cannot offer an amendment on the appropriations bill dealing with prisoner abuse.

I see my friend, the Senator from South Carolina, in the Chamber, the mover of the legislation to have a look at what has gone on in Abu Ghraib and other prison facilities the military has. I think the author of the bill, Senator MCCAIN from Arizona, may have a little bit of expertise on prisoner of war abuse. I think he may have a little bit of authenticity when he comes before the Senate and says he wants to take a look at that.

JOHN MCCAIN spent years of his life in a prison camp in Vietnam, not days, weeks, months but years—try 5½ years—most of it in solitary confinement. So he wants to offer an amendment. He cannot do it unless he gets unanimous consent that he can have a vote on it. He can offer it, but it falls similar to everything else. But I will bet he is going to get unanimous consent because we want him to be able to debate this issue. Who has more standing than the Senator from Arizona to raise this as an issue?

Mr. President, we—I repeat—had a scheduled briefing at 3 o'clock today to find out what is going on in Iraq dealing with intelligence. We have never, ever had a briefing by Negroponte since he has assumed his duties as head of the so-called DNI on April 21 of this year. We have not been briefed by him on Iraq since he assumed his position. So I do not think we are being greedy taking an hour of his time.

Ducking debates about our national defense has become too topical and typical in this country because we are unable to bring matters before this floor. No amendments, no votes, no debates—that is not the way to do a bill in the Senate.

Why didn't we finish the Defense authorization bill the first time? Because we went to gun liability. So this process is unacceptable. We are a nation at war. We have troops in Iraq, in Afghanistan. We have an opportunity to have an open, honest debate about our national defense.

Our troops and the American people deserve better, and that is not what we are having here. And the distinguished majority leader said he was offended

because I asked for a briefing by the Intelligence Director of this country. Offended? I am sorry he is offended.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2863, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2863) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Bayh amendment No. 1933, to increase by \$360,800,000 amounts appropriated by title IX for Other Procurement, Army, for the procurement of armored Tactical Wheeled Vehicles for units deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to increase by \$5,000,000 amounts appropriated by title IX for Research, Development, Test and Evaluation, Defense-Wide, for industrial preparedness for the implementation of a ballistics engineering research center.

McCain amendment No. 1978, to prohibit the use of funds to pay salaries and expenses and other costs associated with reimbursing the Government of Uzbekistan for services rendered to the United States at Karshi-Khanabad airbase in Uzbekistan.

Reed/Hagel amendment No. 1943, to transfer certain amounts from the supplemental authorizations of appropriations for Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Global War on Terrorism to amounts for Operation and Maintenance, Army, Operation and Maintenance, Marine Corps, Operation and Maintenance, Defense-wide activities, and Military Personnel in order to provide for increased personnel strengths for the Army and the Marine Corps for fiscal year 2006.

Warner/Levin modified amendment No. 1955, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2006 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 1977

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, from my conversations with the Senator from Alaska, the chairman, I believe he agrees we will move forward; therefore, I call up amendment No. 1977, which is filed at the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, the pending amendments are set aside for the consideration of this amendment, which the clerk will now report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arizona [Mr. MCCAIN], for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. SMITH, and Ms. COLLINS, proposes an amendment numbered 1977.