

annual Armed Forces authorization bill. There was not one single dissenting voice. I went back and searched the RECORD. Indeed, during the Vietnam period when I was in the Pentagon, there was always a cadre that would vote against it. But I think it was a recognition in this Chamber—and I salute each Member of the Senate who voted for that bill and expressed on behalf of the men and women of the Armed Forces our gratitude.

But much more remains to be done. In the judgment of this Senator—I am just speaking for myself—I believe the next 4 to 6 months is absolutely the most critical period of this conflict in Iraq. How and why we got into that conflict is debated. It has been taking place, but I urge colleagues to look forward to the future to see how we can best support our forces as each one of the volunteers fulfills the orders of the Commander in Chief and carries out the mission.

During the course of the deliberation of our bill, the distinguished Senator from Connecticut, a member of the Armed Services Committee, Mr. LIEBERMAN, gave an eloquent speech regarding that classic statement at the conclusion of World War II by Arthur Vandenberg: "Politics should be checked at the water's edge."

I say to my colleagues with great respect for all, now is the time. The next 60, 90, 120, 180 days is most critical. I urge us to put aside our political differences, put aside our philosophical differences, and look forward and seize the opportunity to support the Iraqis in their forthcoming elections on the 15th of December and the formation of that government in the ensuing 30 days thereafter.

We should be very strong in our efforts to impress upon this new government the urgency of time and the need to show a greater measure of strength and determination than ever before by the various transitional governments that have preceded this government. Now is the time for the Iraqi people and their new government to show determination, quadruple their efforts in forming their new ministries, standing them up so they can assume the full burden of that measure of democracy and freedom that they elect to have among themselves, and to rapidly try to bring this insurgency to a conclusion.

The ground situation as it develops in the ensuing months dictates any thoughts of how and when our forces can be deemed to have completed their mission and begin the return home.

Just days ago, this Chamber rejected an attempt again to set a timetable. We set no timetable. We are there in this critical period of the next 6 months to support the Iraqi people, to support this new government, but in return they must give us a full measure of support and equal effort to achieve these goals.

If I may return to the subject of the IEDs which was a principal part of our

discussion yesterday, I will be consulting with Members, but I believe the Department of Defense has to redouble its efforts to deal with this difficult situation of the IEDs. Each of these officers recounted the number of casualties they experienced in their units. This great Nation shows the magnificent compassion for the families of not only those who lost their lives but lost their limbs, and we are deeply indebted to them. We owe them no less than our full measure of support here at home.

Let us check politics at the water's edge.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

#### PRE-WAR INTELLIGENCE

Mr. STEVENS. Madam President, I am deeply disturbed by what I believe is an attempt to write a revisionist history of our involvement in Iraq and our pre-war intelligence.

Since 1981, I have served as the Chairman or Ranking Member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. As one who has watched over the Defense Department's Appropriations, I was impressed with President Clinton's position on Iraq. The President and his top advisers—Vice President Gore, Secretary of State Albright, National Security Adviser Sandy Berger, and others—consistently made the case we should take seriously the threat Iraq and its weapons, program posed.

I have come to the floor twice in the past to submit President Clinton's February 1998 Pentagon speech into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Before giving his speech, President Clinton was briefed by the generals who command all of our forces. Their briefing convinced President Clinton that he might have to take military action against Saddam Hussein, and he told the generals to be ready.

Those of us in Congress never doubted President Clinton's sincerity or truthfulness regarding this issue. In 1998, he said:

If Saddam rejects peace and we have to use force, our purpose is clear. We want to seriously diminish the threat posed by Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program.

Vice President Al Gore echoed this concern. He said:

Saddam's ability to produce and deliver weapons of mass destruction poses a grave threat . . . to the security of the world.

Secretary of State Madeline Albright told us:

Iraq is a long way from here, but what happens there matters a great deal here. For the risks that the leaders of a rogue state will use nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons against us or our allies is the greatest security threat we face.

And National Security Adviser Sandy Berger warned:

He (Saddam Hussein) will use those weapons of mass destruction again, as he has 10 times since 1983.

Many Members of the Senate agreed the threat was real and imminent. In 2002, Senator KENNEDY said:

We have known for many years that Saddam Hussein is seeking and developing weapons of mass destruction.

Senator ROCKEFELLER warned:

Saddam's existing biological and chemical weapons capabilities pose real threats to America, today, tomorrow.

And Senator KERRY said:

These weapons pose an unacceptable threat.

In October 2002, the Senate overwhelmingly supported giving President Bush the authority to use force in Iraq. We authorized the use of force in a vote of 77 to 23. The facts before us indicated Saddam Hussein posed a grave threat.

Let me be clear: At the time, the facts were undisputed and we were all provided the same information. These were the facts as we understood them. Saddam Hussein had used weapons of mass destruction against the Iranians, his own people and possibly some of our men and women in uniform during the first gulf war.

In 1998, the weapons inspectors were forced out of Iraq. When the inspectors left, the regime was capable of resuming bacterial warfare agent production within weeks. Iraq had not accounted for hundreds of tons of chemical precursors and tens of thousands of unfilled munitions canisters. Iraq had not accounted for at least 15,000 artillery rockets previously used for delivery of nerve agents or 500 artillery shells filled with mustard gas.

Saddam Hussein had been ordered by the U.N. to disarm 16 times, and 16 times he refused to comply. He engaged in a series of deceitful tactics designed to prevent U.N. inspectors from completing their inspections.

Our intelligence agencies gathered further evidence of his activities. This information was classified to protect our sources and methods. I received those intelligence briefings. I believe I received the same information as President Clinton. These intelligence reports were deeply disturbing, and phase I of the Intelligence Committee's investigations found this information was not coerced or influenced in any way. It was our intelligence agency's best assessment of what was going on in Iraq at the time. Had the President received those briefings and failed to act, he would have been negligent in his duty to keep Americans safe. Those in the Senate who voted for the resolution believed this, which is why we authorized the use of force.

I am now disturbed by the way some are twisting this history to suit their own political agendas. Why is anyone calling the people of this administration liars when the speaker shared their position? In many cases, those who accuse the administration of deception previously had made the case even more strongly than President Bush.

The Senate Intelligence Committee spent 2 years putting together a bipartisan report on our prewar intelligence.

Their report found there were no attempts to influence analysts or no evidence that administration officials attempted to coerce, influence, or pressure an analyst to change his or her judgment—not once.

Every member of the Intelligence Committee, Republican and Democrat, approved that report. The Silverman-Robb report and six other major studies found there is no basis for the claim that the administration lied to get us to go to war.

The search for weapons of mass destruction will not be completed on our timetable. Look at this picture: The Iraqis buried entire planes in the desert. We have two photographs of planes being unearthed, full planes buried beneath the sand. When we pulled them out, they were still operable.

Our troops found 30 of these planes buried in the sands of the Al-Taqqadam airfield west of Baghdad—30 planes. That is one-tenth of their entire combat Air Force. If Saddam Hussein's troops had buried one-tenth of their combat aircraft in the desert, who is to say there were no weapons of mass destruction similarly buried? Just because they were not found does not mean they were never there. The Nation of Iraq is the size of California. The materials needed to make weapons of mass destruction could fit in a container the size of a family bathtub. Weapons of mass destruction are no bigger than a family bathtub.

We now stand at a critical moment in history. I believe we must reflect on events leading to the war, but this process is only useful if it is honest and accurate. Those who are trying to rewrite history, revisionist history of these events are simply advancing their own political agendas. They are not advancing the important work due now in the region—and do so on a bipartisan basis.

I agree with the Senator from Virginia, Mr. WARNER, the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services. A flexible timetable for troop withdrawal could jeopardize our men and women in uniform and their mission. The only way we can lose in Iraq is if we defeat ourselves, if we refuse to stay the course. The path to progress is slow and steady. It has milestones, but it does not have timelines. We must remain behind our troops.

Over 200 years ago, our Founding Fathers began the great American experiment. They set out to create a government defined by its commitment to liberty and freedom. Iraq is one of this century's proving grounds for those ideals. Our men and women in uniform, all volunteers, are helping the people of Iraq and Afghanistan build their emerging democracies. Their sacrifices ensure, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, "that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from this Earth."

Distorting our prewar intelligence will not help them complete their mission. We must support the important

work they are doing in Iraq, not send mixed messages. The men and women in uniform were asked to go to Iraq to help Iraq become a democracy dedicated to freedom. They are doing that. I will continue to support those and stay the course and support Iraq's efforts to stand up their own forces so they can defend that freedom.

I yield the floor.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

#### TAX RELIEF ACT OF 2005

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of S. 2020.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2020) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 202(b) of the concurrent resolution on the budget for the fiscal year 2006.

Pending:

Dorgan amendment No. 2587, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to impose a temporary windfall profit tax on crude oil and to rebate the tax collected back to the American consumer.

Durbin amendment No. 2596, to express the sense of the Senate concerning the provision of health care for children before providing tax cuts for the wealthy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, this morning we intend to continue two major amendments from this side of the aisle. The amendment of Senator CONRAD from North Dakota proposes a fiscally responsible substitute; the amendment of the Senator from Washington, Ms. CANTWELL, is regarding energy price gouging. These are both very important amendments and an important debate. I ask consent the pending amendments be temporarily laid aside so Senator CONRAD may offer an amendment.

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

#### AMENDMENT NO. 2602

(Purpose: To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax benefits for areas affected by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma and to extend certain expiring provisions, and for other purposes)

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, first I thank the ranking member on the Senate Committee on Finance, Senator BAUCUS, for his leadership and for the extraordinary amount of work he does to make the work of the Committee on Finance as responsible as it can be.

There are many provisions in the underlying bill that has come out of the Committee on Finance that I support. I think they are broadly supported extensions of expiring tax provisions that ought to be extended.

I salute the chairman of the Committee on Finance, Senator GRASSLEY,

for the good job he has done in putting together this package. While I agree with many of the specific provisions, I have one profound area of disagreement. That profound area of disagreement is that this package is not paid for. The result, if we pass this package, will be to deepen the deficit, to add to the debt, when we already have record deficits and we already have runaway debt.

My colleagues are going to have to answer the question, Why shouldn't we pay for these tax provisions? Why shouldn't we cover the cost? Why shouldn't we prevent the deficit from being expanded? Why shouldn't we prevent the debt from being deepened?

That is the question posed by my amendment. It takes many of the provisions in the Committee on Finance bill, the expiring tax provisions, and extends them for 1 year. It pays for them fully.

It is very important to remember the history. How did we get in the position we are in today? My colleagues will remember this very famous chart that the administration and the Congressional Budget Office presented back in 2001. This part of the chart I call the fan chart showed the range of possible outcomes if we didn't change any budget policies. This range of possible outcomes from a best case scenario; to a median scenario, the midpoint between the range of possible outcomes is the prediction line adopted; to the worst case scenario. These were the projections given to us if we just did nothing.

My colleagues on the other side said: No, this is too conservative, this range of possible outcomes. They said: Don't you understand, if we have tax cuts we will get more revenue so we will be above the midpoint of the range. We might be even above the best case scenario. The problem with that theory is that it did not work out in reality.

Here is what happened in reality: This red line is far below the worst case scenario outlined by the Congressional Budget Office in 2001. I have caught the chairman's attention. He will remember the chart very well from 2001, what the Congressional Budget Office said was the range of possible outcomes. The Congressional Budget Office adopted this midrange of the estimates as their projection.

Many of my colleagues on the other side told me, when I said we shouldn't be betting on a 10-year forecast: Kent, you are way too conservative. Don't you understand if we cut taxes we will get more revenue. We will be above the midpoint of the range of possible outcomes.

Now we can go back and we can check what has actually happened. That is this red line. It is below the worst case possible outcome. Far below it.

So this notion that the tax cuts were going to generate more revenue and were going to prevent massive deficits proved to be wrong. It is very simple.