

ENERGY

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today we will continue consideration of the Energy bill, as we just discussed. The debate has been very thorough and robust. Today I expect it to be so as we debate a number of very important issues, but I am confident, very optimistic, that we will have a strong bipartisan bill that will be overwhelmingly supported by this body by the time we complete it at the end of next week.

I thank Senator DOMENICI and Senator BINGAMAN for their tremendous leadership. They started in this session with a bipartisan commitment to produce a bill that speaks to the needs that are so clear and evident to all of us and to the American people. They deserve great credit for working together and working hard through all of these complicated details to come up with a plan that both sides of the aisle will be able to support.

I am pleased that during the Energy bill debate we are discussing the importance of increasing our Nation's use of renewable fuels, such as ethanol, which we spent a lot of time on yesterday, as we will today, as well as biodiesel.

I am a strong supporter of the renewable fuels standard which will double the use of ethanol and biodiesel over the next 7 years. Increasing use of these home-grown, clean-burning renewable fuels is essential to reducing both our short- and long-term dependence on foreign oil.

We are currently, as has been discussed many times, 56 percent dependent on these foreign sources of oil with all predictions aiming that we will be 68 percent dependent by 2025 if we do nothing. That is a call to action and, in many ways, that explains much of the action on the floor of the Senate this week.

One of the major goals in the bill is to reduce that dependence and thereby enhance our own energy security. We will accomplish that through adoption of this bill. The renewable fuels standard is a critical component, an important aspect of this energy policy.

Increasing use of ethanol and biodiesel is a bipartisan issue. It was in the last Congress. I, along with the then-Democratic leader, Senator Daschle, introduced the renewable fuels standard amendment on the Senate floor. I am working with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to help forge an agreement on this issue again this year, and I am very pleased with our progress to date, over the course of yesterday, and I expect today.

In particular I thank Senators THUNE, TALENT, LUGAR, HAGEL, GRASSLEY, INHOFE, BOND, VOINOVICH, COLEMAN, and colleagues on the other side of the aisle who worked so hard to get us to this point. It was, again, a huge bipartisan effort with people in this body working together. I look forward to supporting this bipartisan effort over the course of the coming days.

When we go back to our States, again and again we hear that anyone filling up that tank of gas knows that America is in desperate need of an energy plan. With gas now averaging well over \$2 a gallon, every American family, every worker, every small business owner is feeling the bite, is feeling the pinch. Gas prices are taking a bigger and bigger piece out of the family budget and that, of course, leaves less money to spend on items such as clothes, food, groceries, as well as looking forward to that next summer vacation.

We can do better. We are doing better in this bill. We know we can. And we have within our reach the ability to deliver clean, reliable, and affordable energy. All we have to do is imagine the future and project out what the future is going to be like, and then pull that back to the present and take action by debating and, where appropriate, amending the bill and then passing it over the next several days.

As we look to the future, imagine a future where coal is turned into a clean, cheap gas. It is not as far away as one might think or as most people thought 10 or 15 years ago. We have a 400- to 500-year supply of coal right here in the United States. My colleague from Tennessee, Senator ALEXANDER, discussed on the floor last week how, if we apply our technological know-how, imagination, and ability, capture that innovation, we can turn that very coal into clean coal gas, and by doing that, as a byproduct we would be able to share that with the entire world. We can do that by capturing our innovations, taking these natural resources, applying those innovations in a way that transforms them, and then sharing them with the entire world.

That is the sort of thinking that is going on in this bill. It is the sort of transformational thinking that the American people expect and should expect. It is time for an energy plan that is long overdue but also an energy plan that incorporates this innovation and this technology. We have gone on for way too long, we have gone on for 10 years without a comprehensive plan. We have attempted this in the past. We attempted it in the last Congress and we were unsuccessful. We passed a good bill on the Senate floor and the House passed a bill, but we did not get agreement in conference to get a bill to the President of the United States.

As we have debated and have been unable to bring a bill to conclusion, energy prices have gone higher and higher. We have become more and more dependent on foreign sources of energy. These foreign sources do not necessarily have the best interests of the United States at heart.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, the United States produced almost as much oil as we consumed. In those decades, imports were very small. In about 1972, U.S. oil production began to decline, and it has been declining steadily ever since.

At the same time as our economy has grown, U.S. consumption of oil has steadily increased. So declining supply, increased consumption. As a result, our reliance on foreign oil and foreign sources of energy, of course, have had to increase. So the problem is pretty clear, and that is the response we are delivering on the Senate floor.

Today, we import most of our oil from the North, from Canada; also from the South, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, and Mexico. However, as we look out over the next 5, 10, and 15 years, the Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration predicts that more of the oil that we need will come from the OPEC countries in the Middle East.

We must take steps to reduce our dependence on foreign countries and thereby enhance our energy security at home. When we rely on other nations for more than half our oil supply, we simply put our security at risk. We need a system based upon efficiency, balance, and common sense. We need a system that will respond to the obvious needs that are growing worse, challenges that are increasing each day that we do not produce a bill.

We can look at nuclear energy as a great example. It is clean, it is efficient, and it has the potential to significantly reduce our dependence on foreign supplies. The Navy powers dozens of its vessels with nuclear energy and docks these ships at ports all over the world. They have not had one accident.

France uses nuclear energy to provide 80 percent of its electricity supply. Japan allows one, two, three new reactors to be built each year. In the United States, we have not ordered a new nuclear power reactor plant in the last 30 years, since the 1970s. We can, and we should, pursue commonsense efforts to produce clean, safe, affordable, and reliable energy, nuclear energy, for America's families. It only makes sense. It is common sense.

Increasing our domestic supply is critically important, but we also have to look at the conservation side of the equation. We simply need to look at the transportation sector. Nearly 70 percent of the oil we use goes to power the cars and trucks that we drive every day. If we are serious about reducing our dependence on foreign oil, we must look at new ways to power and fuel those vehicles. We are already doing this with hybrid cars which, as we all know, are becoming more popular, and with the alternative fuels that we have been discussing on the floor yesterday and today, ethanol and biodiesel. We must continue to move in this direction by continuing and increasing our investment in hydrogen fuel cell research.

President Bush has said that his goal is that today's children will take their driver's test in a zero-emission vehicle. That would go a long way toward helping to reduce our dependence and enhance our security.

The fuel that we are increasingly talking about, which is probably the most dramatic when we look at the challenges before us, is natural gas. Natural gas is another energy source we depend on heavily and another area in which we are becoming increasingly reliant on imports. Because natural gas is clean burning and relatively cheap, it has become the fuel of choice for new electric power generation in recent years. Sixty percent of homes across America are heated and cooled today with natural gas.

While demand has been steadily growing, and for good reason, domestic supply has remained relatively flat. In fact, in 2003, we imported 15 percent of the gas we used but by 2025 the percent of gas that is used that will be imported is going to go up twofold, is going to double. Yes, we need to take bold action in the United States to address America's energy challenges, and we need to do this head on. We are doing that on the Senate floor.

The Energy bill we are debating over these 2 weeks is a strong step in the right direction. I hope that we will be able to continue to work together to pass a strong and bipartisan bill so we can get this important legislation to the President of the United States so that he can sign it.

America needs this policy. It needs this policy to keep our families safe, strong, and secure. We need a policy that keeps us competitive, and we need a policy that continues to help us to move forward.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

BOLTON NOMINATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, from the outset of the debate on John Bolton's nomination, Senate Democrats have had a clear and consistent position. If the administration works in good faith to give the Senate the information it deserves, the Senate Democrats are ready to immediately give this nomination an up-or-down vote. We said this as far back as April, and it remains our position today. Despite the administration's refusal to turn over any of the requested information during this time period, Senator FRIST told me yesterday he was inclined to seek another vote on the Bolton nomination. While the majority leader is certainly within his rights to do this, unless the administration changes course before this vote is held, the outcome will be exactly the same as it was last month and may even have less support than it did before.

Here is why: The history and precedent in the Senate makes it clear the Senate has a right to information that bears directly on the fitness of a polit-

ical nominee to serve. Virtually every other administration has recognized the Senate's rights and provided the needed information—every administration, that is, except this one. Many colleagues on the majority have stood for the Senate's right to get information from the executive branch in the past. We have many statements on record to that effect. These colleagues have made it clear, with their words and deeds, that it was perfectly legitimate for the Senate to withhold action on an executive nominee until the executive branch provided certain information, even if the information requested had nothing to do with the nominee in question.

In this instance, we are seeking information that bears directly on the fitness of John Bolton to serve as our representative to the United Nations. We are not engaging in any fishing expedition. We are seeking clearly defined documents and information about two very important issues:

No. 1, did Bolton attempt to exaggerate what Congress would be told about Syria's alleged weapons of mass destruction capabilities? Remember, we have some experience in weapons of mass destruction information being altered and manipulated.

No. 2, did Bolton use and perhaps misuse highly classified intelligence intercepts to spy on bureaucratic rivals who disagreed with his views or for other inappropriate purposes?

These are two very direct, simple issues that bear on this man's capability and fitness to serve in the United Nations.

The administration's position on these requests has been that political appointees are qualified to see this information but that Senators elected by the American people are not. I believe this is unacceptable.

During this impasse, Senate Democrats have repeatedly demonstrated our good faith to break the current impasse and give Mr. Bolton a vote. Yesterday, I heard some of my Republican colleagues assert that Democrats have been shifting the goalpost on resolving this issue, and they are absolutely right, we have. Instead of having a 100-yard football field, now we have made it only 60 yards. We have moved in their direction. Just last week, Senators BIDEN, ranking member of Foreign Relations and, of course, Senator DODD, the ranking member of the Rules Committee, made another effort to resolve the impasse over the Bolton nomination. Everyone in the Senate and outside this body should understand that this offer moves significantly away from our initial request in a sincere effort to resolve the situation. Everyone should also understand that, unfortunately, this latest effort to reach an accommodation with the White House has apparently met the same fate as previous efforts to work things out—silence from the administration.

Even yesterday, the ranking member of the Finance Committee—I should

say the vice chair Senator ROCKEFELLER of West Virginia, which is the proper title—offered his assistance, to break the impasse. He sent a letter to the Director of National Intelligence, John Negroponte, to that effect.

We have said publicly, if this administration, similar to every other administration, respects the requests of the Senate, we will immediately move to grant Bolton an up-or-down vote. I stand by that pledge today. I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will recognize we are following their precedent with our actions today. I hope this administration brings an end to its pattern of abusing its powers and treats this coequal branch of Government with the respect it deserves.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VITTER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

ENERGY POLICY ACT OF 2005

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 6, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6) to ensure jobs for our future with secure, affordable and reliable energy.

Pending:

Domenici amendment No. 779 (to amendment No. 775), to eliminate methyl tertiary butyl ether from the United States fuel supply, to increase production and use of renewable fuel, and to increase the Nation's energy independence.

Schumer amendment No. 782 (to amendment No. 779), to strike the reliable fuels subtitle of the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I believe the order of business is my second-degree amendment to the amendment of my friend from New Mexico.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is the pending question.

Mr. SCHUMER. When do we expect a vote, Mr. President? What is the order of business here?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We do not yet have a consent request. We are expecting that soon.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I will address this amendment. Let me say, this amendment is one that still requires all the Clean Air standards to be met but removes the ethanol mandate. That is what this amendment does.

The underlying Domenici amendment on ethanol is so wrong. The amendment is a boondoggle. It hurts drivers and it hurts the free market. It is a boondoggle because it takes money out of the pockets of drivers and puts it into the pockets of the big ethanol producers.