

people in their efforts to secure their liberty and to fulfill their democratic potential. This is an extraordinary opportunity to change the course of history and bring peace and stability to the heart of the Middle East. The challenge is great, but we must persevere. America's security will depend on it. We cannot allow the terrorists to achieve their twisted aims and we cannot allow Iraq to fall into chaos or sectarian violence or return to those days of brutal tyranny and support for the terrorists.

By the same token, Iraqis must continue to persevere as well. They must defeat the terrorists. They must deny them sanctuary in their communities. They must reject their heinous philosophy of murder.

Freedom for Iraq is essential for freedom at home, and that is why we must continue to stand alongside our Iraqi partners. Over time, we will step aside as they assume complete responsibility for their security and for their future.

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

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LOTT. Could I inquire, is the leader prepared to speak or could I go ahead and make some remarks?

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is in a period for morning business. The majority is in control of the first half of the time.

IN THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE KATRINA

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I observe that the President pro tempore of the Senate is looking quite spiffy this morning in his bow tie.

At this point in my life, any ray of light and happiness is welcomed. I will take a few minutes to sort of bring up to date my feelings about what is happening in the aftermath of Katrina.

I want my colleagues to know that there are some positive developments. It is hard to know that or decipher that if one listens to the media and the negative things. I admit it is not a perfect situation, but each day a little progress is being made.

My staff and I are staying in touch with mayors, supervisors, State officials, and volunteer organizations, and we do feel we are making some headway. I again want to emphasize, though, this is an overwhelming disaster that is in many ways too much for human beings to comprehend or contend with. It is going to take time, patience, diligence, effort, and, yes, money, that we must count on from voluntary contributions and the Federal Government.

I do think we are making some progress. Right now the biggest prob-

lem is probably temporary housing. After disasters, there are always stages. There is the immediate aftermath where people are trying to get into the devastated area, trying to save lives, then trying to get basics such as water, food, generators, and gasoline. Then there is the move into the early cleanup and the need for temporary housing. We are kind of in that phase.

It is very hard to deal with the logistics of moving temporary housing, whether it is ships or trailers, into the area to be staged to move individuals. That takes time. It is very difficult. It happens after every hurricane and probably after every disaster. If we are looking for a place where we need to find a way to move fast and do a better job, emergency housing is probably one of those we should focus on.

I want to thank my colleagues again on both sides of the aisle for their letters, their calls, their expressions of concern and sympathy. Beyond that, I want to thank Senators who have taken personal action, things one would never have dreamed of, such as the Senator from Alaska, who has made a very generous offer. We needed tetanus shots. The Senator from New Jersey, Mr. CORZINE, helped us get the tetanus shots we needed. I could go through the entire Chamber and name Republicans and Democrats, people from all over America, who have taken helpful actions.

At least once a week, I want to come to the floor and speak briefly about the good things. There will be plenty of time to try to find a way to make things better in the future. I do hope the Senate will not pass a series of rifleshot pieces of legislation, well intentioned and needed quickly—we need that—but I hope we will look at a broader recovery effort, something that will make sure the area does not just recover and rebuild and get the economy growing but we do it in a way that will be magnificent for the people, the area, and the country. We can learn from this for other parts of the country when disasters hit.

We have the immediate problem, we have the short-term needs, and we have the long-term needs that we need to think about a little bit. It is hard to be patient when you are flat on your back. But I do think, before we start setting up commissions to do this, a czar to do that, rebuilding authority to supervise something else, let's think those through carefully first. I am counting on my colleagues in the Senate, the committee chairmen particularly, to think about that. But also we have to make sure our leadership pulls us together and we coordinate our efforts.

I want to focus on two areas without which we could not have made it. One is the military. We know how valuable our men and women in uniform are. But we couldn't have made it without the Coast Guard, without the National Guard, without the 82nd Airborne, without General Honore, and without

Thad Allen, Coast Guard Chief of Staff now in charge of recovery in Louisiana and Mississippi, without the thousands of troops who came in, restored order, and started cutting through the debris and providing help, the Seabees out of Gulfport, MS. By the time we got to the end of the first week, we had a battalion in every county in Mississippi.

They were doing their work. Nobody was directing them. They found a problem and they got it done. So let's not have any thought by Active-Duty military personnel, or anybody, that we should not think about our National Guard in terms of disaster assistance and to make sure they have the equipment to cut through and get through and deliver the supplies we need. When I flew over New Orleans 10 days ago, it was like a war zone. We had helicopters coming through with triaged patients. We had helicopters with water buckets. We had helicopters dropping food. We had helicopters picking up people. It was magnificent and marvelous.

Before this is over, I will have a long list of individual stories about the military and particular units that went beyond the call of duty.

Some people are saying the Federal Government has not done this or the Federal Government has not done that. Let me say when the National Guard and our military arrive on the scene, things change. We could not have made it without them, period. People would have died, many people would have died were it not for the Coast Guard and National Guard and our regular military. We have turned to our Navy, every one of our branches. Keesler Air Force Base has been a major staging center and helped thousands of people.

The other area I want to acknowledge, once again, is the incredible human kindness and initiative of individuals, volunteers, faith-based groups of all kinds, and charitable groups. I told the story last week about a group of men who came from Burke, FL, with a Bobcat and a front-end loader. They showed up at my yard and said: Can we help? I asked them where they were from. I think they were from a church in Burke, FL. I didn't get their names. There was too much going on. I said: Could you please clear the road in that area so we can get trucks and equipment in there? Can you help that lady get into her house because you couldn't even get in to see what was left.

They went to work. I saw them off and on all day. I never talked with them again. They just went to work. Through voluntarism, people have shown up with generators and chain saws and said: Where can I help? From all over the region—from all over America. I know personally of several churches. I will not start by denomination, but let me say groups of all faiths and denominations, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and probably Muslim, too. They all went to work.

One I am particularly aware of was Christ United Methodist in Jackson,

MS. They formed an organization, inspired, I think, by the wife of Congressman CHIP PICKERING. They started bringing in supplies. They got people organized from all different denominations. They sorted the gifts, they boxed them, they labeled them, and they sent out two 18-wheelers a day. Nobody told them where to go. They said: What do you need? And they sent it.

That story has been replicated over and over again. So there are heroes—individuals, first responders, military, people who just showed up and went to work, church-related groups. If it were not for the volunteers, the church-related groups, Red Cross and Salvation Army, I don't know where we would be.

Maybe that is the way it should be. This is still America. It is individual Americans who respond to every crisis and will do whatever needs to be done, will pay any price. I want the record to show there are a lot of people who have contributed so much personally. They have cried with us, they sweated with us, they bled with us, and they are doing it now on the ground in Pascagoula, MS, Biloxi, Gulfport, Pass Christian, Long Beach, Bay St. Louis and Waveland and towns in the hinterland throughout Louisiana.

I thank all those who have come to our aid. It is not over yet. Keep it coming.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. LOTT. I am happy to yield.

Mr. WARNER. I am going to follow on with some greater detail about, as you say, the extraordinary participation of the men and women of the Armed Forces and, indeed, the Coast Guard, which is separate from my report that will be included with others today.

It is very important that you addressed the Senate this morning. If I may say, I have been privileged to serve with you nearly a quarter of a century in this institution. I commend you for your personal courage. You have faced adversity such as few of us have ever experienced. Throughout this year, there has been personal tragedy—loss of your mother, loss of your house—yet we see the leadership you have provided, indeed, as has our President and this institution and others in the face of this hurricane.

The Armed Services Committee is starting its briefing this morning. Two reports come from the Department of Defense to the Congress everyday, giving a detailed analysis with regard to the deployment of our troops. I left the briefing to come speak to the Senate this morning. We will be changing the force structure to meet the needs. For example, in all probability, the carrier can now move out, if it has fulfilled its mission. Frankly, as distressing as it is, there are tremendous assets connected with mortuary responsibilities which are now being moved in by the Department.

I want to thank our colleague. I know the Presiding Officer, the Presi-

dent pro tempore of the Senate, shares these feelings with every Member of this body. We salute you and your family.

Mr. LOTT. If the Senator will yield, I do appreciate his very kind remarks. I hope he will convey for me and the people of my State, and I am sure Louisiana and Alabama, too, to the military officers with whom you will be speaking, how much we appreciate what they have done. I don't know the numbers but it is thousands, maybe as many as 40,000 National Guardsmen. I flew in a Blackhawk helicopter a week or so ago—they were from New York; and I know they are there from Nebraska and Arkansas and all over America, literally. And of course the Active-Duty personnel. But the Coast Guard is a separate story. The Coast Guard, before, during, and after the hurricane, saved thousands of lives. When it was over, they didn't quit. But there are so many other things they have done. Channels have been cleared so we can get ships in. My hometown, it is navigable into our industrial site where we have a water refinery.

The USS *Comfort* is providing now for our medical needs and providing a bed to sleep in for first responders and food for people who haven't had a good meal in quite some time. They came in early. I could go down the list.

Once again, we have learned that our military is not just about fighting, preserving peace, and our interests around the world. They are there in disasters, man made and natural, in a way that nobody else could be.

The attitude of our men and women and the professionalism of the officers I met with was so impressive. I flew into the command center at Gulfport, MS. The National Guard was in command there. A three-star General from Alabama was there. The Alabamians were there right after the Mississippians got there because it took 7 hours to get to the scene because you had to cut through the pine trees on Highway 49 to get there. It took them 7 hours to get less than 90 miles.

I could go on and on, but the record needs to reveal the tremendous job that has been done, how important they are, as they work with us as we transition into different needs.

I thank the Senator for his comments about my own personal situation. In life you get a lot of trials. It is very hard. But what is the hardest is to see how these people now are still suffering in heat and debris. There are so many needs, and we can't get the help there fast enough. This is the time to try men's souls, but will make you stronger and better in the end.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, our distinguished colleague has stood the test—

Mr. LOTT. Thank you.

Mr. WARNER.—you and your fellow Senators from the three States most grievously affected. If you wait a minute, I will give you the following figures. Today, more than 72,000 mem-

bers of the Armed Forces have been deployed to the Gulf Coast, including 22,439 Active-Duty and more than 45,871 members of the National Guard—of which over 400 come from my State, I say to the Senator. I went down Friday in my State to prepare one of the bases to receive the evacuees. But every single State in our Union, including the territories, has contributed their Guard in response to the needs of your community.

ARMED FORCES RESPONSE TO KATRINA

Mr. WARNER. I thank the distinguished Presiding Officer. Mr. President, I would first like to say, as I mentioned, we receive a report everyday in the Senate from the Department of Defense regarding specifically the Guard and Active-Duty. Then, in addition, we receive a report from the Corps of Engineers. Our committee is a repository of these reports, but I am happy to share them with any Senators who so desire. They need only contact the Armed Services Committee or me personally, and I will see they are provided with the reports.

I join Senator LOTT and others in expressing our profound gratitude and pride to the men and women of the Armed Forces and indeed their families who are left at home for their service, responding with courage and untiring professionalism and compassion to our fellow citizens who fell victim to this tragic disaster.

As you know, our military has a supporting role in the effort. I underline "supporting role" because in no way do we mean to displace the valiant efforts of those on the scene, the first responders, such that were able to muster their forces and respond.

I wish to pay tribute to the magnificent response of all. I have stated the numbers a minute ago.

Furthermore, I wish to highlight that the National Guard forces are meeting the challenge, as well as the national commitments—Afghanistan and Iraq. Once again, our Guard is—I don't like to use the word "stressed," but they are challenged. I have spoken with General Blum, who is the Commander of the National Guard. He never once flinched when he said we are doing the job and we are going to succeed. Our hats are off to the National Guard. The Navy deployed 20 ships, including the USS *Harry S Truman*—it is an aircraft carrier. I remember when that ship was named—the USS *Whidbey Island* and the USS *Iwo Jima* and the USNS *Comfort*, the hospital ship. More than 400 aircraft, including 373 helicopters and 93 airplanes, are in support of search and rescue, medical evacuation, and logistical supply missions.

The heroism of those who pilot those helicopters and the crews who go down and rescue the individuals—those chapters in our history will be recorded for