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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JIM WEBB, a Senator from the State of Virginia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer.

Let us pray.

Lord God, eternal and infinite, at the beginning of this new week, we give You thanks for the grace You bestow upon us daily. Thank You for each morning with its light, for rest and shelter of the night, for health and food, for love and friends, for everything Your goodness brings.

Please continue to guide our judgment and actions so that we may fulfill Your will. Help us when we are blind so that we may see the path You have set before us. Remind our leaders to remember those in need.

Continue to watch over those who serve and protect our country. Lord, give wisdom to our Senators as they guide us down the challenging road into the future.

And, Lord, we ask You to comfort Senator NORMAN COLEMAN as he mourns his father's death.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JIM WEBB led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 30, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JIM WEBB, a Senator from the State of Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WEBB thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 3 p.m. The time will be equally controlled between the two leaders. At 3 p.m., the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 796, with the time until 5:30 to be equally divided and controlled between Senators BAUCUS and GRASSLEY or their designees.

At 5:30, the Senate will proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed. If cloture is invoked, we can proceed to this very important legislation quickly.

For all Members of the Senate, last week we accomplished a lot. Here are the "must dos" this week: SCHIP and lobbying and ethics reform. There are other things we would like to do and, if we can get consent, we will do them.

The competitiveness conference report is completed. I hope we can do that by unanimous consent. The WRDA bill is completed, and we hope to be able to do that by unanimous consent. We also, again, later today, will offer a unanimous consent request to do the Freedom of Information Act improvements. This is an extremely important

piece of legislation. It has bipartisan support and Senators LEAHY and CORNYN are the sponsors. I hope we can complete this before we leave. The Republicans raised an objection last week when we raised this by unanimous consent. I hope that problem is now taken care of.

So that is what we have to do. I will repeat, we must complete SCHIP and lobbying and ethics reform, and the other matters would be icing on the cake if we can do them.

IRAQ

Mr. REID. Mr. President, last week was a very productive week for the Senate and the American people. With Democrats and Republicans working together, the Senate was able to pass the conference report implementing the 9/11 Commission recommendations. Also, we passed the Fiscal Year 2008 Homeland Security appropriations bill and the Higher Education Reauthorization Act.

This week, we will turn our attention to important domestic initiatives, including reauthorizing the Children's Health Insurance Program and passing the ethics conference report to strengthen the integrity of our Government. That legislation is completed. The House will pass it tomorrow. Without any qualification or reservation, it is the most significant lobbying and ethics reform in the history of our country. I hope we can do this piece of legislation without a lot of turmoil. I hope that people understand how important it is to the American people.

As we focus on issues that will lead to a better and brighter future for millions of Americans, two new reports illustrate that neither the present nor the future seem particularly bright for the Iraqis and Iraq itself, where our brave troops are fighting in this intractable civil war.

One report that came down this morning is from a humanitarian organization. The other is from President

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Bush's own Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction.

According to the first report—released by Oxfam, an international aid organization, and the NGO Coordination Committee network in Iraq—8 million Iraqis are in need of immediate emergency aid. So according to this first report, 8 million Iraqis are in need of immediate emergency aid. That is probably more than a third of the population. It means they are desperately lacking basic daily necessities such as food, water, and sanitation.

Even more troubling, these conditions are worse now than before the war started. Before the war, 19 percent of Iraqi children were malnourished. Today, that is 28 percent. And 50 percent lacked adequate water supplies before the war; that is now 70 percent. So 70 percent of all Iraqis live without clean water.

With awful and deteriorating conditions such as these, it is no wonder a recent poll of the Iraqi people showed 70 percent of the Iraqi people believe the American presence is making them less safe.

Our troops are certainly not to blame for these failures to make the Iraqi people safer or healthier. In the war's 4-plus years, they have accomplished everything they have been asked to do. They took down the Iraqi dictator. They have heroically battled those who seek to destabilize Iraq and the region. They have provided time for Iraqi factions to come together and negotiate a peaceful settlement of their differences which, unfortunately, these factions have not taken advantage of.

These failures lie with the President, who took us to war without a plan for peace, and the Defense Department generally, which has not managed to administer a strategy for success, and the Iraqi Government, which hasn't taken responsibility for their country's own future.

The second new report, from the Inspector General's Office for Iraq Reconstruction, sheds new light on how thoroughly our efforts in that area have failed to help Iraqis and how dearly that failure is costing American taxpayers.

This inspector general's report tells us Iraq's central government has refused to take responsibility for more than 2,300 reconstruction projects America has already paid close to \$20 billion to construct.

The result is many projects are lapsing or continue to rely on American funds only.

I say this in the background of the Iraqi people having arguably the largest oil reserve in the world. When I met those in the first Iraqi Government, along with Senator Frist, one of the Iraqis proudly said of the governing body: People say we have the second largest oil reserves in the world, but we have the largest oil reserves in the world.

I don't know whether it is first or second, but they have a lot of oil,

which translates to money, and they are not helping at all with these projects.

Not a single project has been turned over to the Iraqi Government in more than a year. Even among those few that have been turned over, many, if not most, are now failing.

As a result, our almost \$6 billion investment in Iraq reconstruction is largely being wasted. What would happen in America? We would not tolerate \$6 billion being wasted in taxpayer dollars, and we should not stand for it in Iraq—especially when it is our taxpayers' money that is being wasted.

As long as we continue our open-ended commitment of troops, the Iraqi Government has no incentive to step up. As long as we continue financing projects that they let lapse, they will continue to let our troops and taxpayers shoulder the burden.

The father of a soldier from Nevada wrote me recently to tell me how that burden is affecting his son and his son's fellow soldiers. He gave me permission to read this when I called and asked him after reading this heartfelt letter. He asked me not to mention his son's name, so I am not going to do that. I will not mention the man's name who wrote the letter. If anybody has a question, I will be happy to show them the letter in my office.

He wrote:

Our son is a 20-year-old cavalry scout in the Army. He and his best friend quit college their first semester to "make a difference." We are a close-knit family and although we only get to speak to Mike once every 3-4 weeks, the conditions, morale and circumstances he deals with are like nothing we read about in the press.

I have always supported our troops but cannot support the war anymore, particularly when I continue to receive information from my son that is upsetting to me. He has not had a day off since his deployment in early January. He has had his hummer blown up and narrowly escaped death, seen his close friend blown to pieces 30 yards away, had a suicide bomber blow up a hummer in his unit 50 yards away, and the stories go on.

My concern is no days off, 7 days a week in combat, 4 hours of sleep per night and no days off in sight for the future. I have to buy a good deal of equipment for him to send over to Iraq . . .

I am a successful local businessman and a very patriotic person . . . but we feel helpless and do not know who to speak to . . . What do our soldiers have to look forward to except fighting every day, looking death in the eye daily, no days off, strategy that changes daily, 125 degree weather, [and] little communication with the outside world . . ."

The Presiding Officer, from firsthand experience, knows what this man is talking about. Most of us don't.

This young man from Nevada, fighting with bravery far beyond his 20 years, deserves better.

As his father said, he signed up for the Armed Forces to "make a difference." There are challenges facing America in nearly every corner of the globe—real dangers that will affect our security for generations to come. This young soldier should be helping us wage a real war on terrorism that goes

after those who attacked us. He should be involved in peacekeeping missions to stop genocide and spread peace. Instead, he is stuck in an endless war that even President Bush's own military experts admit has no military solution.

It is long past time to end this preoccupation with Iraq. It is time to rebuild our overburdened military, so this young soldier from Nevada, and 160,000 more just like him, have the rest and care they need to do their job effectively.

As we work this week to make life better for millions of Americans at home—especially children—we continue to think of our troops and the Iraqi people who suffer abroad, and we will continue to work every day to bring about the new course our troops and all Americans deserve.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business until 3 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

Mr. CARDIN. I thank the CHAIR.

(The remarks of Mr. CARDIN pertaining to the introduction of S. 1899 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Iowa.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES RESTORATION ACT

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, last Thursday, July 26, 2007, was the 17th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. On that day in 1990, thousands of people gathered on the south lawn of the White House. It was the largest gathering at least to that date—it may still be—for the signing of legislation. It was a beautiful sunny day. President Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act into law. That bill had taken a long time to develop, years to develop. A lot of hard work and effort went into it.

As the chief Senate sponsor of that bill, getting that bill passed was the proudest day in my life, having been raised with a brother who was disabled. Seeing how he was discriminated against all his life compelled me when