

We have to develop a system to address traumatic brain injuries, from the battlefield all the way back to the VA hospitals and beyond. Screening is absolutely critical. Pre- and post-deployment screening has to be done. This signature wound has to be a top priority at each and every step along the path to recovery for these wounded members of the armed services.

The bottom line is we have not yet offered our brave men and women a real plan to take care of them when they come home. The Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs must come together to solve these problems plaguing the system. Too many of our men and women get lost in the transition between the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs. I pledge to them and I pledge to our fighting men and women and to all of their families that this new Democratic Congress is going to hold them accountable for their inaction and finally ensure that we are going to give these men and women what they deserve when they come home.

We hear a lot in this body about who supports the troops. Well, I say to my colleagues that each and every one of us has a responsibility to support these troops, particularly those who are injured, particularly those who come home with TBI and other injuries, not just when they come home but far into the future, and we have not yet budgeted responsibly to do that. We have not provided the programs to do that. We have not done everything we can. This is one Senator who is going to keep talking until we get it done.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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

IRAQ

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, in approximately half an hour we begin proceeding to debate on the 9/11 bill. Saturday a week ago we concluded without resolution a debate on an Iraq resolution. I come to the floor of the Senate this morning to share with my colleagues my thoughts on Iraq and where we are, and to do so in the context of 9/11.

When I collected my thoughts about what I would say this morning, I thought back to a lot of lessons I learned from a great Georgian. In fact, on Saturday of last week, the day we had that debate, it was the 75th birthday of former Senator Zell Bryan Miller of Towns County, GA. I learned a lot from Zell Miller in my lifetime. I learned humility when he beat me for Governor of Georgia in 1990. I learned respect for class in 1996 when he came back and asked me to chair the State Board of Education after he taught me a lesson in humility 6 years earlier. When I read his book, "Corps Values: Everything You Need to Know I Learned in the Marines," I learned about commitment.

Also in the final debate I had with Zell Miller in 1990, I learned about how you snatch victory when somebody else thought they had it. In the closing debate, 48 hours before the general election when the cameras went on each of us for our last 60 seconds, Zell Miller's closing remarks were simply this. He said:

You know, ladies and gentlemen, we are going to have a race for governor in 2 days and it's all up to you. But I want you to remember something. Zell Miller knows one thing. If you ever walk down a country road and you see a turtle sitting on a fence post, there is one thing you know for sure. He did not get there by himself.

In taking that remark, I would remind my colleagues we didn't get to where we are by ourselves. We got here together at least in terms of Iraq. After 9/11 happened, within days, the United States of America changed and the President announced to the Congress we would no longer as a nation have a defense policy based on reaction. We would have a defense policy based on preemption. We learned on 9/11 you can't wait to find the smoking gun in terrorism to react, because if you do, it is too late. In the case of 9/11, there were 3,000 dead citizens of this world because we didn't preempt. The United Nations, 171 countries, voted unanimously in favor of resolution 1441 which authorized or threatened military action against Saddam Hussein if he didn't cooperate with the disclosures and the inspectors that the U.N. was prompting. When the U.N. failed to act and this President, George W. Bush, wanted to act, he came to this Congress and we voted overwhelmingly to support using force to hold Saddam Hussein accountable and to go after weapons of mass destruction and to go after those sanctuaries of terrorism.

One would think, in listening to the debate in the Senate in the last few weeks, that some people have bad memories. They forgot about those votes. They forgot about the fact that George Bush didn't get there by himself. He got there with us. Now, are we disappointed in some of the things that have happened? Yes. Do we want to change some things? Yes. Do we differ? Yes, and the Senate is the place we differ. But while we differ, we should not discourage our troops. We should not discourage the people who are deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan and around the world in terms of our resolve.

So I would suggest as we go to the debate on the 9/11 bill, we consider it as a wonderful opportunity to make a simple statement, a statement that while we may differ, there is one thing we don't differ on: We don't differ on the fact that we will give our troops the support and the finances and everything they need to carry out the mission to which they are assigned. That is precisely what Senator JUDD GREGG of New Hampshire wanted to do in his resolution that never could come to the floor in that 2 weeks of debate on the Iraq resolution that failed to get

enough votes to get a final vote. It is time, with a bill as relevant as this 9/11, which is the genesis of all we deal with today, that we send that clear message. While we may differ on some policies, we do not differ on the financial support and the absolute commitment to our men and women in harm's way.

I wish to put one other thing into perspective. As much bad news as we always talk about, a lot of good things happen. While some people may differ with the President's commitment to a surge in Iraq, even in the anticipation of that surge, there are some good things that have happened. Moqtada al-Sadr left Sadr City. He saw what was coming. Prime Minister al-Maliki already called for—and there are now talks about it—a regional conference on Iraq, including all the neighbors in the region—something many in here have called for, and I support, including getting the Iranians and Syrians into dialog.

Last week, the Iraqi council approved the foundation of a hydrocarbon bill, oil revenue sharing with the people and provinces of Iraq. That is soon to go to that assembly. Think of something; the people of Iraq are on the doorstep of having equity for the very first time in their history.

There are also disappointing things that have happened. Yes, we wish we were home with a victory already. But we have accomplished a lot, and we are this close to accomplishing the ultimate goal, which is a peaceful democracy in Iraq, terrorism without a sanctuary, and a statement that people are more important than power and dictators and terror.

The United States is the country that has, in history, led and today needs to lead as well. I encourage our colleagues, as we get into this 9/11 debate, let's not forget about the debate we had on Iraq. We ought to send a clear message of support to our troops, understanding that we may differ on the policy. It should be clear and precise that this Congress and this country will see to it that our men and women have the finances and resources to carry out the orders to which they are responsible and they take on without any reservation.

I began my remarks by acknowledging my friend, Zell Miller, and his 75th birthday and all of the lessons I have learned from him. He preceded me in this Senate, and I extend to him a belated birthday wish today in this speech. I also want us to be reminded of Zell Miller's many speeches on the U.S. Marine Corps, service to our country, patriotism, and commitment. Zell Miller knew as a soldier, he knew as the Governor of a State commanding the National Guard, and as a member of the Senate that while there may be political differences on the end result, there should be no difference in the support for the men and women who defend us and fight for freedom every day.

As this debate unfolds, it is my hope we will have the opportunity to bring the Gregg amendment to the floor and vote to send a clear message to our men and women in harm's way that we support them, the funding will be there, and we will stay with them as they pursue the cause on behalf of peace, liberty, freedom, and democracy in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world.

I yield the floor and 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. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I recently came to the Senate floor to express my views relative to the deliberations this body was undertaking approving and disapproving of the President's way forward in Iraq. I am strongly in favor of this body debating the U.S. policy relative to Iraq and believe all my colleagues are as well.

However, as I stated in my earlier speech, it is not appropriate to allow the majority party to completely dictate the terms of that debate, as they have tried to do over the last several weeks. That is why I voted against closure on the motion to proceed to the Reid resolution on February 17, along with a vast majority of my Republican colleagues.

Mr. President, since that time, a new strategy relative to this debate has come forward. The strategy is essentially an attempt to deauthorize or restrict U.S. military action in Iraq by revoking or altering the Iraq war resolution, which passed this body by a vote of 77 to 23 on October 11, 2002. I don't agree with this tactic.

On January 26, the Senate unanimously approved GEN David Petraeus for his fourth star and to be commander of the multinational forces, Iraq. No Senator opposed his nomination. General Petraeus supports President Bush's plan and new strategy in Iraq and has embarked on the mission for which President Bush chose him and for which this body unanimously confirmed him. Once again, now we are being asked to disapprove and de-authorize the very mission we have unanimously confirmed him to execute. Hopefully, my colleagues can see the irony, as well as the inconsistency, in the choice they are presenting before this body.

As I have said before, we need to give the new strategy in Iraq a chance to work. If General Petraeus comes and says it is not working, then I am prepared to change course. President Bush's current strategy is not guaranteed to work. However, no approach I have seen or heard discussed in the past several months has any greater

chance of success than the course we are now taking. Therefore, this strategy deserves a chance.

In talking with some of my colleagues, on the Republican side as well as the Democratic side, who recently returned from Iraq, I am very hopeful that based on the comments they have made, per their visual inspection of what is going on in Iraq today, based upon their conversations with General Petraeus, we are seeing some successes, even though they are minimal at this point. But there is now hope and encouragement that this strategy is going to work.

If Members of Congress truly don't support our efforts in Iraq and believe we should withdraw troops, they should vote to cut off funds for the war, which is the primary authority Congress has in this area. However, having refused to allow the Senate to vote on protecting funding for our troops serving in harm's way, the Democrats are now proposing another symbolic resolution.

This is the fourth resolution that the Senate Democratic leadership has backed to address the troop increase, and the Democrats still insist on avoiding the fundamental issue of whether they will cut off funds for troops serving in Iraq.

As the Wall Street Journal wrote in an editorial:

Democrats don't want to leave their fingerprints on defeat in Iraq by actually voting to bring the troops home. So instead, they're hoping to put restrictions on troop deployments that will make it impossible for the Iraq commander, General David Petraeus, to fulfill his mission.

This is essentially an attempt to ensure the policy does not succeed. Logically, the Senate should be giving General Petraeus everything he needs to succeed, both in terms of financial as well as political support. But that is not what the majority party is trying to do.

Democrats in the House of Representatives have undertaken a plan that would tie war funding in a supplemental spending bill to strict new standards for resetting, equipping, and training troops. This strategy to choke off resources and the Senate plan to revise the use of force authorization are attempts to make the war in Iraq unwinnable while avoiding political responsibility.

As Charles Krauthammer has said:

Slowly bleeding our forces by defunding what our commanders think they need to win or rewording the authorization of the use of force so that lawyers decide what operations are to be launched is no way to fight a war. It is no way to end a war. It is a way to complicate the war and make it inherently unwinnable—and to shirk the political responsibility for doing so.

There is nothing easy or pretty about war, and this war is no exception. Not a day passes that I don't consider the human cost of our attempt to defeat the terrorists and eradicate extremism in Iraq and replace it with a self-reliant and representative government.

The debate, as we move forward, should focus on how we can most

quickly and effectively achieve the victory that all of us desire. It is not about political posturing. It is about what Congress can do to support our young men and women in Iraq and help them accomplish this critical mission.

Losing the global war on terrorism is not an option. Failure in Iraq would be devastating to our national security, entangling the Middle East in a web of chaos that breeds terror and extremism. The Iraq Study Group and countless expert witnesses have testified that simply leaving Iraq, without stabilizing the country, would be disastrous.

As the senior Senator from my State, my support of our mission and our troops includes a responsibility to examine the tactics and question the steps that we take to reach our goal. I will continue to do that in a very deliberate way, but I intend to be constructive in my approach and criticism in order to do everything we can to ensure that our troops and our mission succeed, rather than doing whatever I can to make sure they fail.

When this motion to deauthorize or micromanage the war in Iraq comes to the floor of the Senate, I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

I yield the floor. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

IMPROVING AMERICA'S SECURITY ACT OF 2007

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to the consideration of S. 4, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4) to make the United States more secure by implementing unfinished recommendations of the 9/11 Commission to fight the war on terror more effectively, to improve homeland security, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill which had been reported from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

S. 4

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,