

drug benefit manager is what he is—said this:

For this proposal to work, the Government would have to take over price negotiations. It would have to take over formularies. You can't do one without the other.

But the House bill just introduced says you can. That is a parenthetical on my part.

Continuing to quote:

Drug manufacturers won't give up something for nothing. They will want a preferred position on the Medicare formulary—some way to increase the market share of their products.

The only comparison I know of is, of course, the Veterans' Administration. I have already referred to that point. So when people come up to me and ask why the Government negotiates for veterans and not for seniors, I tell them what the Medicare system, modeled after the VA, would look like.

Yesterday I spent some time explaining what Government negotiations looked like for the VA and other Federal programs. Again, instead of listening to my words, I want my colleagues to hear what other people have said.

As explained in the Washington Post:

The veterans program keeps prices down partly by maintaining a sparse network of pharmacies and delivering three-quarters of its prescription by mail . . . Moreover, the program for veterans is in a position to negotiate hard with drugmakers because it can credibly threaten not to buy from them. Its plan excludes new medicines.

Why would any person on the other side of the aisle, or even a Republican who might want to consider doing this, want to deny any drug to a senior citizen? But the VA program excludes 70 percent of the drugs that senior citizens can get under Part D. And why would anybody backing these plans want to follow the Veterans' Administration and deliver three-quarters of the prescription drugs by mail? Do they want to ruin their community pharmacist? I don't think anybody does.

The Los Angeles Times continues the discussion, stating:

Applying the VA approach to Medicare may prove difficult. For one thing, Medicare is much larger and more diverse. VA officials can negotiate major price discounts because they restrict the number of drugs on their coverage list. Instead of seven or eight drugs for a given medical problem, the VA list may contain three or four. If a drug company fails to offer a hefty discount, its product may not make the cut.

Mr. President, the final thoughts I will leave with you today come from a letter sent by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. I want to make clear to the new Senators that the Congressional Budget Office is "god" around here because when "god" speaks up and says something costs something and you disagree with them, your disagreement doesn't mean anything unless you have 60 votes to override them, a supermajority.

The Congressional Budget Office, after reviewing the Democratic bill in the House of Representatives at the re-

quest of Chairman DINGELL, the chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, concluded the following, and here I am quoting again and I have a chart on this quote:

H.R. 4—

That is the Democratic bill in the House—

would have negligible effect on federal spending because we anticipate that the Secretary would be unable to negotiate prices across the broad range of covered Part D drugs that are more favorable than those obtained by PDPs under current law.

The letter continues to say:

. . . [W]ithout the authority to establish a formulary, we believe that the Secretary would not be able to encourage the use of particular drugs by Part D beneficiaries, and as a result would lack the leverage to obtain significant discounts in his negotiations with drug manufacturers.

In conclusion, the CBO's letter to Mr. DINGELL says:

. . . [T]he PDPs have both the incentives and the tools to negotiate drug prices that the government, under the legislation, would not have.

I think that pretty much sums it up. I can think of nothing more to say than what the CBO says in regard to the Democratic bill in the House of Representatives. But maybe to quantify all this, I have already said that the 25 drugs used by seniors most often—the way we price drugs now through plans negotiating for their members to drive down the price of drugs—the average price of those 25 drugs is down 35 percent. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

As I said earlier this week, I hope we can put politics aside and focus on some of the real improvements we could be making in the drug benefit. I wrote it. There are items that need to be changed, and I mentioned some of those items on Monday. This is what we should be focusing on instead of trying to fix something that ain't broke. I still hope that reason will prevail around here.

I yield the floor.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that each side's period of morning business be extended by an additional 15 minutes.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, in the spirit of comity and accommodation, to clarify with the Senator, how much time does the Senator from Texas and the Republican minority have?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Twelve minutes remain.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Is the Senator saying another 15 minutes after that 12 minutes?

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, responding to the distinguished Senator from Maryland, I need 10 minutes, and my colleague from Colorado is asking for some time to speak as in morning business as well. If we can try to work that out—

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, may I offer an accommodating suggestion, that after the Senator from Texas speaks, I be allowed to speak—I need about 10 minutes—and then the Senator from Colorado can speak. But if you have your 12 and another 15, it really will cause havoc over here.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, can we work out maybe an agreement for 10 minutes for Senator CORNYN, the Senator from Maryland uses her 10, and then I would like to have 15 minutes. I ask unanimous consent for that.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I have no objection to that.

Mr. CORNYN. I have no objection.

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

Mr. CORNYN. I thank the Senators.

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

THREAT OF ISLAMIC RADICALISM

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I come to the Chamber to speak on the pre-eminent issue facing our country today, and that is the threat of Islamic radicalism, and specifically to respond to the comments of some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle regarding the President's speech and the plans he has announced for our fighting forces in Iraq last night.

As I have tried to sift through the differences of opinion—and here again, among people of good will who love their country and who are true patriots—I am forced to conclude that the division or faultline falls between those who have simply given up and do not believe the situation in Iraq is salvageable and those who believe the President's plan offers the last best hope for success in Iraq.

I agree with those who say you cannot look at Iraq as if through a soda straw, as if that is the only challenge facing the United States and the Middle East, because, indeed, failure in Iraq, descension into a civil war, creation of a failed state will undoubtedly create a regional-wide conflict that will necessitate the United States and its allies reentering the conflict at some later date were Iraq unable to sustain and defend and govern itself, as the Iraq Study Group said it must.

Indeed, I believe it is incumbent upon those who say the only solution is to draw down our troops in a gradual redeployment to explain what they intend to do when Iraq descends into a failed state, creating another platform, as Afghanistan did once the Soviet Union left that country, which gave rise then to the Taliban and al-Qaida. What is their plan to deal with that consequence if, in fact, that is what occurs, if the United States leaves Iraq before it is able to sustain itself, to govern itself, and defend itself?

I congratulate the members of the new majority, but I must say, with the new majority comes not only the privilege of setting the Nation's agenda in

the Congress but also the duty of governing. It is not acceptable to merely criticize, particularly if you are in the majority. We need to know what their alternative plan is for this unacceptable possibility of failure in Iraq if, in fact, we are to cut the legs out from under the Maliki government and simply withdraw before the Iraqis are able to sustain themselves.

Mr. President, I am one of those who have not given up on Iraq and who believe that our fighting forces in Iraq are doing a lot of good. It is true, as the President said, that mistakes have been made, but it is important to recognize that the initial threat in Iraq was of a Saddam Hussein delivering weapons of mass destruction and technology about biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons to terrorists to use against us, as the terrorists did on 9/11. Even a remote possibility that might happen was unacceptable. We voted with a vote of 77 Senators—on a bipartisan basis—to authorize the President to use military force to take out Saddam Hussein.

I don't need to recount the failures of our intelligence community that led us to erroneously believe he actually at that time did have weapons of mass destruction. But there is no question at all that Saddam Hussein sought weapons of mass destruction, much as his neighbor now to the east, Iran, seeks nuclear weapons itself. It is simply unacceptable, in a world where there are those driven by a radical ideology that celebrates the murder of innocent civilians, as al-Qaida and other Islamic radicals do, to allow them to get weapons of mass destruction and then to use them on innocent civilian populations, whether it is in the United States or abroad.

It is true that the President has said that this is a test for the Maliki government. We are putting a lot of reliance, yet pressure, on the Maliki government to perform. When Prime Minister Maliki said he will stand up to the death squads and Shiite militias, like that of al-Sadr, we will hold him to his word.

It is absolutely critical to the success of reconstruction in Iraq, to a peaceful self-determination through a democratic form of government, that the security situation in Iraq be stabilized. The only way that is going to happen is if a lawful government of Iraq obtains a monopoly on the legal use of force in that country. Right now, the people of Iraq don't trust their own Government to provide that sort of security, so they have broken down along sectarian lines and relied upon Shiite militias and other extralegal groups to try to provide that security. But what happened is that we have seen retribution killings between different ethnic groups. But the threat is that sort of sectarian violence is not going to be contained just to Iraq but will spill over into the region. Iran will use the opportunity of Shiite violence to exact ethnic cleansing on Sunni populations

in Iraq. Iran will use its ability to expand its influence into Iraq, perhaps to expand its own borders.

That will not go without some response by the Sunni majority nations in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia, for example, has already expressed grave concern that if the Shiite militias and others continue to exact violence upon the Sunni population, they may very well find a necessity to become involved and, indeed, we know that what some people view as if through a soda straw, violence in Iraq will become a regional conflict.

Is there any doubt that if, in fact, we fail in Iraq because we have given up, because we don't believe Iraq and the Middle East is worth this last best chance for success, is there any doubt that the oil and gas reserves in that region of the world will be used as an economic weapon against the United States? So not only will we have a security vulnerability using that platform of a failed state as a launching pad for future terrorist attacks, much as al-Qaida did in Afghanistan following the fall of the Soviet Union in that country, but is there any doubt that in addition to additional terrorist attacks in the United States and among our allies and around the world, that the oil and gas reserves in that region will be used as an economic weapon to wreak a body blow against the rest of the world?

So with winning the election on November 7 and gaining the majority and the mandate of the American people comes responsibility. The responsibility of our Democratic colleagues is to point out what their plans are when Iraq fails if we do not even try, as the President has proposed last night, to salvage the situation there by a change of course, by working with our Iraqi allies, backing them up, stiffening their backbone, to restore the security environment there so that reconstruction and democracy and self-government can flourish. I don't know whether it will work. I don't know whether anyone can ever guarantee in a time of war that one side or the other will be successful. But the consequences of giving up and of failure are simply too horrendous to contemplate, present too great a risk to the American people and civilized people around the world, for us not to try.

That, to me, is the choice we have been given—between trying, using the last best effort we can come up with through this change of course in Iraq, or simply giving up. I would like to hear from our colleagues what their plan is if Iraq does descend into that failed state, if a regional conflict occurs and it then becomes necessary at a future date not to send an additional 20,000 American troops but far more to protect America's national security interests.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senator from Maryland is recognized for 10 minutes.

IRAQ

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I yield myself 10 minutes of the time controlled by the majority.

Last night, President Bush asked the American people to support a surge of military troops in Iraq. Many are using the term "surge," though the President didn't. Make no mistake, this is a dramatic escalation of our troop presence in Iraq. In the debate leading into the President's speech, the term "surge" was used, which implied something that was limited and temporary. An escalation is where we are heading, which means a long-term commitment with no end in sight.

We are in a hole in Iraq, and the President says the way to dig out of this hole is to dig deeper. Does that make sense? When you are in a hole, do you get out by digging deeper? This is a reckless plan; it is about saving the Bush Presidency, it is not about saving Iraq.

Before Congress can act on this plan—and act we must—there are several questions that need to be answered. I need those answers, you need those answers, the American people need those answers and, more importantly, our troops and their families need those answers. Is this policy achievable? Is it sustainable? What is the President's objective in calling for this escalation of troops? Who is the enemy? Does the Bush administration even know anymore? When our troops are embedded with Iraqi forces, are they going to shoot Sunnis or Shiites? Are we taking sides in a civil war? I don't think we know. What is the Iraqi Government going to do for itself? We suddenly have something called benchmarks. Where have those benchmarks been for the last several years? What is going to be the political solution that only the Iraqis can do to resolve the power sharing with Sunni, Shiite, and Kurds? Where are the oil revenues that were talked about to pay for this war? When is the Iraqi Government going to end the corruption in their own ministries so that they can come to grips with services, security, and power sharing and oil revenue sharing?

Who is going to disarm the militias and insurgents and, more importantly, who is going to keep them disarmed? Are we going to be in those neighborhoods forever? Where are the troops going to come from for this escalation? Our military, our wonderful military is worn thin. Also, how are we going to pay for it? While China builds up its reserves, we build up our debt.

Make no mistake, though. U.S. troops cannot do what the Iraqi Government will not do for itself. Iraq needs a functioning government that produces security and services for its own people. It needs a government of reconciliation that will function on behalf of the Iraqi people. Iraq needs its own security forces up and running. No matter what training we give them, they have to have the will to fight. They need to put an end to the sectarian violence, and they need to end