withdraw now, or to set a short timetable deadline in 2 or 3 months. I will read what he said:

Yes, sir, Senator. When I went before the Iraq Study Group, I prefaced my remarks by saying I think I'll give a rather—I'm going to be giving a rather somber assessment of the situation in Iraq. But before I do that, I said, let me tell you. If we leave under the current circumstances, everything gets worse.

At that point, I commended him for being a master of understatement. He went on to say:

Three quick areas. More Iraqis die from the disorder inside Iraq. Iraq becomes a safe haven, perhaps more dangerous than the one al-Qaida had in Afghanistan. And finally, the conflict in Iraq bleeds over into the neighborhood and threatens serious regional instability.

I said, well, what would be the threat to the U.S. homeland? How does that affect us in Washington, in Rhode Island, Missouri, Kansas, New York, Los Angeles, and elsewhere? He said:

The immediate threat comes from providing al-Qaida that which they are attempting to seek in several locations right now, be it Somalia, the tribal area of Pakistan or Anbar province—a safe haven to rival that which they had in Afghanistan.

I have my views on this. This is the overwhelming consensus of the intelligence community. There are no great options, but the best option, they believe, is to provide American troops to support what the Government of Iraq has pledged to do, and that is to end the insurgency, to stop the Shia death squads, to cut the Sunnis in on a fair share of the Government, and take responsibility not only for clearing but for controlling the areas in Baghdad that have been the problem. So I think as we talk about the options available, it is vitally important that we listen to the intelligence community and their best assessments of what happens if we follow the President's plan or if we choose a course of continuing to do what we have been doing, without assisting the Iraqis to take control of their Government, or if we cut and run.

I ask unanimous consent that the transcripts which I cited be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SSCI OPEN HEARING: CURRENT AND PROJECTED NATIONAL SECURITY THREATS

JANUARY 11, 2007

NEGROPONTE (responding to a question from Sen. Bond): And I think the view pretty much across the community is that a precipitous withdrawal could lead to a collapse of the government of that country, and a collapse of their security forces, because we simply don't think that they are ready to take over, to assume full control of their security responsibilities.

We think that that is a goal that can be achieved on a gradual basis and on a well planned basis. But to simply withdraw now, I think could have catastrophic effects. And I think that's a quite widely held view inside of Iraq itself.

* * * * *

NEGROPONTE: I think, in terms of Al Qaida's own planning, if you look at the letter that Zawahiri wrote to Zarqawi last year about establishing in Iraq a sort of a beachhead for the expansion of Al Qaida's ideology throughout the Islamic world, establishing the caliphate, it would be the very sanctuary for international terrorism that we are seeking to avoid,

BOND: General Maples?

MAPLES: Sir, I'd follow up on that statement by the ambassador, because I truly believe that a failure in Iraq would empower the jihadist movement. It would give that base of operations from which the jihadist movement would expand. And it's consistent with the goals of Al Qaida in Iraq to establish that Islamic state, and then to expand it into the caliphate.

I also think that there, of course, will be very significant regional impacts, both in terms of stability to other countries in the region.

There will be economic impacts with respect to, in particular, hydrocarbons and the effect that that could have, particularly if those resources were in the hands of jihadists. And . . .

BOND: In other words, they could get the profit off of the high price of oil.

MAPLES: Absolutely. And then I would follow with one last, and that is the empowerment—further empowerment—of Iran within the region.

BOND: General Hayden?

GEN. HAYDEN: Yes, sir, Senator. When I went before the Iraq Study Group, I prefaced my remarks by saying I think I'll give a rather—I'm going to be giving a rather somber assessment of the situation in Iraq. But before I do that, I said, let me tell you. If we leave under the current circumstances, everything gets worse. And . . .

BOND: You have a masterful way of understating it.

HAYDEN: Three very quick areas. More Iraqis die from the disorder inside Iraq. Iraq becomes a safe haven, perhaps more dangerous than the one Al Qaida had in Afghanistan. And finally, the conflict in Iraq bleeds over into the neighborhood and threatens serious regional instability.

BOND: Any threat do you see—what threat to the United States homeland?

HAYDEN: The immediate threat comes from providing Al Qaida that which they are attempting to seek in several locations right now, be it Somalia, the tribal area of Pakistan or Anbar province—a safe haven to rival that which they had in Afghanistan.

Mr. BOND. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Hawaii is recognized.

Mr. AKAKA. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. AKAKA pertaining to the introduction of S. 310 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. AKAKA. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IRAQ

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, the issue that is paramount in the minds of many Americans is the war in Iraq. It is a consuming issue for us because we know that as we stand in the safety of the Senate Chamber or in our homes across America, at the same moment in time, 144,000 American soldiers are risking their lives. Sadly, some are giving their lives almost on a daily basis. Many are injured and come home to face a different life than they ever imagined.

The cost of this war, of course, starts with the human accounting. Over 3,013 American soldiers have died as of today, 23,000 have returned injured, 6,600 seriously injured, with double amputations, blindness, or traumatic brain injury of a serious nature.

This morning's Wall Street Journal, in an article by David Rogers, talks about the real cost of this war in dollar terms. Many of us have used the numbers of $380 billion, $400 billion, and some have come to the conclusion that the number is really much higher and that when you account for our obligations to our veterans and rebuilding the military after this war, it will range in the hundreds of billions of dollars more. This will affect our Nation. It will affect the quality of our life. It will affect our spending on basics, whether it is the education of our children, the health of our citizens, building the infrastructure so our economy can expand, or creating higher education opportunities so that the 21st century can be an American century, as the 20th century was.

This war has taken its toll. It isn't the first war that has been controversial in our history. Some of us are old enough to remember another war not that long ago. It was October 19, 1966, on the floor of the U.S. Senate, across the aisle, when a Senator from the State of Vermont, George Aiken, rose to speak. George Aiken gave a speech about the war in Vietnam. It is one that has been quoted many times since. He said a lot about the war at that moment. Some of the things he said are interesting in a historical context.

Senator Aiken said, in October of 1966, about the Vietnam war:

The greater the U.S. military commitment in south Vietnam, however, the less possibility that any south Vietnamese government will be capable of asserting its own authority on its own home ground or abroad. The size of the U.S. commitment already clearly is suffocating any serious possibility of self-determination in south Vietnam for the simple reason that the whole defense of that country is now totally dependent on the U.S. armed presence.

Of course, Senator Aiken went on to say that we should declare victory and start bringing our troops home. He said:

Such a declaration should be accompanied not by announcement of a phased withdrawal, but by the gradual redeployment of

U.S. military forces around strategic centers and the substitution of intensive reconnaissance for bombing.

This unilateral declaration—

Senator Aiken said—

—of military victory would herald the resumption of political warfare as the dominant theme in Vietnam.

He closed by saying:

Until such a declaration is made, there is no real prospect for political negotiations.

When Senator Aiken took the floor and gave that speech in October of 1966, we began that year with fewer casualties in Vietnam than we have already incurred in Iraq. Around 2,800 American lives had been lost in Vietnam at the beginning of 1966. But 1966 was a bloody year in Vietnam, and by the end of that year, we had lost 8,400 soldiers as Senator Aiken gave his speech. Had we followed his advice, what a difference it might have made. By the end of that Vietnam war, we hadn't lost 8,000, we had lost 58,193 troops.

The President's call for increasing the number of American soldiers who will be serving and fighting in Iraq is a grim reminder of the cost of escalation. Instead of assessing where we are today in honest terms, the President is continuing a strategy which has failed. He has conceded that point. The President no longer says we are winning the war in Iraq. He concedes we have made serious mistakes—mistakes which all of us know have cost us dearly in human life and in the cost of this war.

Now we face the reality of our politics in this town. In 2 weeks, things have changed pretty dramatically here in Washington. If you haven't noticed, with the hearings on Capitol Hill with the Democratic Congress, there is a different tenor, there is a different approach. Before, over the last 6 years, the President has had a compliant and supine Congress, afraid to ask hard questions about this war. That has changed. And the encouraging thing is that the hearings before the Foreign Affairs Committee last week showed that not only is the Democratic majority speaking out with important and relevant questions, but now our Republican colleagues are joining us in what should be a national and bipartisan chorus. This is a moment of accountability when this President and the administration will have to answer for policy decisions. It was a Republican Senator last week who made a statement in that Foreign Affairs Committee, which sadly I have to agree with, when he said that our invasion of Iraq was the greatest strategic foreign policy blunder in recent memory. I think it may be one of the worst mistakes in the history of our country, one we will pay for in years to come.

Now I watch carefully for the reaction in Iraq as we are preparing to send more soldiers, and I am waiting for signs and signals and statements from the al-Maliki government that they understand this is a new day, and I am still waiting. Until they are prepared to eliminate the militias, whether they are going to disband them or destroy them, there can be no security on the ground in Iraq. I read the statements by our soldiers and the media where they say the Iraq Army and the Iraq police force is a dead horse and we are not going to get anywhere by kicking it. If that is a fact, then 21,000 American soldiers' lives won't make a difference. That is the reality of what we face.

In the coming days ahead, very soon after we finish this debate on ethics legislation, we are going to move into a more serious and open debate on the war in Iraq. Initially, there will likely be a markup in one of the committees on a resolution. It will come to the floor, and we will consider it. I sincerely hope that, like the Foreign Affairs Committee meeting of last week, it is a bipartisan resolution because I will tell you, the sentiment about this war is strongly bipartisan or nonpartisan across this country.

First and foremost, there are some basics we should make clear. No. 1, how much we respect and admire and will stand behind our troops. These men and women in uniform, the best and bravest, have done everything we have asked them to do—in fact, many times with displays of heroism—and they have done more than we could ever expect from any human being. They have been there. They have unflinchingly responded to the call to arms and have served us so well. Their families stay home with worry and prayer, hoping they will come back safely. For those soldiers and their families, the first thing said is thank you, thank you from a grateful nation for all you have given to this country and continue to give.

Secondly, we won't turn our backs on these soldiers. Whether it is a matter of the equipment they need now to be safe in Iraq and to come home to their families with their missions completed or, if they come home with a need, whether it is through the Veterans' Administration or for college education or for some help in their lives, we need to be there. They were there for us; we need to be there for them. That almost goes without saying.

But I wish to make it clear from the Democratic side, and I am sure I speak for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, we will never shortchange our troops. We will never shortchange their safety. For those who suggest any disagreement with foreign policy of this administration somehow is going to be at the expense of our troops, they are just plain wrong. In the final analysis, we will keep our word to our soldiers.

The other point I would like to make, though, is if we expect this to end and end well, it can only end with a political solution in Iraq driven by Iraqi leadership. We cannot superimpose a democracy on Iraq. They have to come to this clear understanding that their future is in their own hands. We can help them aspire to this goal, but ultimately they have to take the difficult, painful steps moving toward it. That means, of course, putting an end to the sectarian violence.

For 14 centuries now, the people of the Islamic faith have had a disagreement about who were the rightful heirs to their great Prophet Muhammad. We cannot resolve 14 centuries of this sectarian debate and violence in one little country with more American soldiers. This is something which will have to be resolved if Iraq decides their future will be a democracy. They have to treat all Iraqis in a fair and honest way instead of favoring one sect over another. They have to bring an end to violence, whether it is inspired by Sunnis or Shias or others. Whatever the inspiration, it has to come to an end.

The militias that now control parts of Baghdad and parts of Iraq have to come to an end as well. You can't have private armies in a country and expect the national army to have the strength to control the situation. We need to see the police forces in Baghdad and other places really emerge as professionals. When I was there in October, the reports were very disappointing. It was said that if you went to a police station, you could decide right off the bat whether it was going to be a Sunni or Shia police station and then decide how they would react to crime committed by their own. That has to end. We can't change that by sending American soldiers into battle. We can't change that with American lives and American injuries. Only the Iraqis can change that.

As Senator Aiken said 40 years ago now:

The unilateral declaration of military victory would really herald the resumption of political warfare in south Vietnam.

We need to move this to a political level, and that is where I think the President's recommendations last week are so wanting. He still is in the mindset to believe that enough American soldiers can somehow change the politics of Iraq. That is never going to happen. It has to come from the Iraqi people.

So we face a challenge—a challenge which we accept—to have an honest, nonpartisan, productive, and positive debate on our foreign policy in Iraq. Those of us who disagree with the President really stand in an awkward position in this regard. I sincerely hope the President is right. I hope 21,000 American soldiers change the whole contour of the debate and the future of Iraq. I don't believe they will, but I want this to end and end well, and I don't care who takes credit for it. But I believe—sincerely believe—that the only way to convince the Iraqis of their responsibility is for us to start bringing American troops home, as Senator Aiken called for in Vietnam in 1966 with 8,000 American lives lost, and that we start the phased redeployment of our troops. Had America, had Congress, had the President in 1966 followed the

suggestions of the Senator from Vermont, 50,000 American lives might have been spared. By the end of the Vietnam war, almost 3,000 Illinoisans had given their lives in Vietnam. Some were my buddies in high school, my friends with whom I had grown up. I still remember to this day and wonder, if the Senate at that moment in time had made the right decision, a decision Senator Aiken had called for, whether they might be alive today. That is the reality of war, and it is the reality of these foreign policy decisions.

ETHICS REFORM

Our business before the Senate now is the Senate ethics reform bill. We have a big task ahead of us. The leadership has made it clear to Senators on both sides of the aisle that we are going to finish this bill this week. It could mean long sessions, as Senator REID said earlier today. It could mean we are in late in the night, perhaps even on the weekend, but we want to get this important part of our business behind us. The culture of corruption, the climate of corruption which has been on Capitol Hill over the last several years has to come to an end.

There will always be Members of the House and Senate who can think of another way to improve the way we do business. Each of us has our own ideas. I was fortunate, as I said before on the floor of the Senate, to start my Senate and public career with two extraordinary men, Senators Paul Douglas and Paul Simon of Illinois, who tried to set new standards of ethical conduct in national service. Back when I was fresh out of law school and penniless, I went to work for Lieutenant Governor Paul Simon, who insisted that every member of his staff make a complete income disclosure every year and a complete net worth disclosure.

My first disclosure brought real embarrassment to me and my wife because we had nothing and with student debts would have qualified for bankruptcy under most circumstances. We didn't file bankruptcy, but those annual disclosures were embarrassing until we finally passed a point where we had a few meager possessions and were on the positive side of the ledger.

I have continued to do that every year. I make the most detailed disclosure I can in my financial statement, not categories of wealth or income but actual dollar amounts. I have done it every single year. I know it serves up to my critics a ready menu of things on which to attack me. That's OK. I want to make it clear that in the time I have been in public service, the decisions I have made—good, bad, whether you agree with them or not—have not been driven by any desire to come away from this experience wealthy.

I have not imposed that on my colleagues here, or suggested it by way of amendment, that they do a detailed income disclosure, put their income tax returns with that disclosure, and a net worth statement each year. But I feel comfortable doing it. I am glad I got started. Now that my family is beyond the embarrassment of those early disclosures when we had nothing, they have come to accept it every year as just a routine. It is a small thing, but it is voluntary on my part, and I hope that others, if they see the need, will accept voluntary changes in the way they approach this to demonstrate their commitment to ethics in public service.

The amendment before us by Senator REID, Senator HARRY REID, our majority leader, is one that deals with the use of corporate airplanes. That has been a source of some embarrassment and question before. I believe that Senators REID and MCCONNELL have shown real leadership in moving this amendment forward. We will consider some changes to it during the course of our debate but, once again, it is a step in the right direction.

Finishing this, we will move to the minimum wage bill and then to a debate on Iraq and then probably to the stem cell issue, so we have quite an agenda before us. Our friends in the House are benefited by something known as the House Rules Committee, which can expedite the process. The Senate doesn't work that way. We have a unanimous consent process which is slow, ponderous, deliberate, and, for Members of the House, absolutely maddening. It will take us longer.

At the end of the day, though, I hope we end up with a good work product for the American people.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam 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.

LEGISLATIVE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2007

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1) to provide greater transparency in the legislative process.

Pending:

Reid amendment No. 3, in the nature of a substitute.

Reid modified amendment No. 4 (to amendment No. 3), to strengthen the gift and travel bans.

DeMint amendment No. 12 (to amendment No. 3), to clarify that earmarks added to a conference report that are not considered by the Senate or the House of Representatives are out of scope.

DeMint amendment No. 14 (to amendment No. 3), to protect individuals from having their money involuntarily collected and used for lobbying by a labor organization.

Vitter/Inhofe further modified amendment No. 9 (to amendment No. 3), to prohibit Members from having official contact with any spouse of a Member who is a registered lobbyist.

Leahy/Pryor amendment No. 2 (to amendment No. 3), to give investigators and prosecutors the tools they need to combat public corruption.

Gregg amendment No. 17 (to amendment No. 3), to establish a legislative line item veto.

Ensign amendment No. 24 (to amendment No. 3), to provide for better transparency and enhanced congressional oversight of spending by clarifying the treatment of matter not committed to the conferees by either House.

Ensign modified amendment No. 25 (to amendment No. 3), to ensure full funding for the Department of Defense within the regular appropriations process, to limit the reliance of the Department of Defense on supplemental appropriations bills, and to improve the integrity of the congressional budget process.

Cornyn amendment No. 26 (to amendment No. 3), to require full separate disclosure of any earmarks in any bill, joint resolution, report, conference report or statement of managers.

Cornyn amendment No. 27 (to amendment No. 3), to require 3 calendar days' notice in the Senate before proceeding to any matter.

Bennett (for McCain) amendment No. 28 (to amendment No. 3), to provide congressional transparency.

Bennett (for McCain) amendment No. 29 (to amendment No. 3), to provide congressional transparency.

Lieberman amendment No. 30 (to amendment No. 3), to establish a Senate Office of Public Integrity.

Bennett/McConnell amendment No. 20 (to amendment No. 3), to strike a provision relating to paid efforts to stimulate grassroots lobbying.

Thune amendment No. 37 (to amendment No. 3), to require any recipient of a Federal award to disclose all lobbying and political advocacy.

Feinstein/Rockefeller amendment No. 42 (to amendment No. 3), to prohibit an earmark from being included in the classified portion of a report accompanying a measure unless the measure includes a general program description, funding level, and the name of the sponsor of that earmark.

Feingold amendment No. 31 (to amendment No. 3), to prohibit former Members of Congress from engaging in lobbying activities in addition to lobbying contacts during their cooling off period.

Feingold amendment No. 33 (to amendment No. 3), to prohibit former Members who are lobbyists from using gym and parking privileges made available to Members and former Members.

Feingold amendment No. 34 (to amendment No. 3), to require Senate campaigns to file their FEC reports electronically.

Durbin amendment No. 36 (to amendment No. 3), to require that amendments and motions to recommit with instructions be copied and provided by the clerk to the desks of the majority leader and the minority leader before being debated.

Cornyn amendment No. 45 (to amendment No. 3), to require 72-hour public availability of legislative matters before consideration.

Cornyn amendment No. 46 (to amendment No. 2), to deter public corruption.

Bond (for Coburn) amendment No. 48 (to amendment No. 3), to require all recipients