

zero in on this question of single-source drugs, where we do need some bargaining power.

There are some who have said the only possible way to have negotiations is if you set up some kind of one-size-fits-all national formulary. They say: The VA has one. Gosh, you all in the Senate would not want to limit the drugs available to our country's seniors.

Let me make it clear what Senator SNOWE and I are doing rejects that approach. We are not talking about a nationwide formulary or some kind of list of drugs that restricts seniors' choices.

By the way, when the former Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tommy Thompson, felt it was important to do the kind of thing Senator SNOWE and I are talking about on the drug Cipro, Secretary Thompson did not go out and set up a nationwide formulary. He didn't say: We are going to say the price of the pill is \$1.27. He did not set up some kind of arbitrary price-control regime. Secretary Thompson, in his last meeting with the press when he was leaving the Department, said he wished he had the power to bargain under Medicare.

Secretary Thompson did exactly the kind of thing that I and Senator SNOWE have been talking about. He said we have to make sure that the consumer and the taxpayers get a good deal for Cipro. Secretary Thompson did not set up a nationwide formulary. Secretary Thompson did not set up some price-control regime. Secretary Thompson did not say: It is going to be \$1.27 per pill. He said: Let's negotiate, let's talk, let's go back and forth as everyone does in the marketplace in Rhode Island, Oregon and everywhere else across the country. Let's ask: What are we going to do to make sure that everyone gets a fair shake?

That situation, of course, was an emergency, because we had anthrax. But as the Senator from Rhode Island has pointed out a number of times over the last few months, for a lot of seniors, trying to afford prescription medicine is kind of like having a new emergency every day.

Secretary Thompson said: Yes, we have a big emergency on this anthrax situation. I think the Senator from Rhode Island knows exactly what I see when I am home in Coos Bay, John Day, Pendleton, or Gresham, Oregon, and everywhere else. For a lot of seniors in this country, every day is an emergency with respect to being able to afford their medicine. Those seniors ought to know that their Government, in the case of the single-source drug, for example, where there is monopoly power, can bargain in those kind of instances without price controls, without a nationwide formulary. That is what Senator SNOWE and I and others, on a bipartisan basis, wish to stand up for—to help those seniors and those taxpayers.

Now, some have argued that as seniors get a better deal for Medicare, that

means higher prices for everyone else. They, also, argue that negotiations would not do anything. I don't know how one can make both arguments at the same time and make sense. Those two do not connect.

What Senator SNOWE and I wish to do is have a Medicare program that is a smart, savvy shopper. By being a better shopper, seniors and taxpayers are going to save. We know that no one goes to Costco and buys toilet paper one roll at a time. They shop smart. We ought to do that with Medicare.

I was pleased with last week's Committee on Finance hearing. Chairman BAUCUS and others said it is valuable to have additional information to know whether markets for drugs are achieving the best price possible. I and Senator SNOWE have been interested in that approach as well. We know there are a variety of pharmacies out there that can offer cheaper medicines to seniors without limiting the drugs available, and we find it hard to believe that Medicare cannot do exactly the same thing. Let us give Medicare the opportunity to do exactly the same thing that people do in New Hampshire, Texas, and Rhode Island; that is, to shop smart, look for a bargain, and don't set up nationwide price controls and don't set up a nationwide formulary that restricts the kind of drugs our seniors can get.

If we work in a bipartisan way, which is what Senator SNOWE and I have been trying to do on this issue for 3½ years, we can draw a line that promotes smart shopping in Medicare without going over the line to price controls and restrictive formularies. Let us try to lower the temperature on this particular debate by looking at ways to shop smart without price controls.

In 2004, the Congressional Budget Office said it would make a difference in at least one key area I have been talking about today. I believe it would make a difference in other key areas. I am looking forward, as a member of the Senate Committee on Finance, to working under the leadership of Chairman BAUCUS, on a bipartisan basis, to get this issue resolved because, as the Presiding Officer of the Senate has noted over these many months, this is not an abstract issue for the people most involved. Those are seniors walking on an economic tightrope. We don't know what will happen to medical costs this year, but we can make sure we use every possible opportunity without price controls to make the Medicare Program a smart shopper.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. I ask unanimous consent to proceed as in morning business for 15 minutes.

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

IRAQ

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise to talk a little bit about the situation in

Iraq and how we are trying to deal with this as a nation. We need to start with, when we are discussing Iraq, what are our national interests and why are we engaged there.

Our basic national interest in Iraq is the protection of America, our desire to make sure that we are projecting our purposes in a way that reduces the ability of those who would wish to do us harm in this war against us, which was declared in the late 1990s, when it was obviously brought to our shores on September 11, that in that war we are best postured to make sure terrorists, specifically Islamic fundamentalists who wish to do us harm, are not successful. That is the first purpose of our engagement in Iraq.

The second purpose, of course, is to make sure our troops, who are engaged in pursuing this war on the ground in Iraq, are adequately funded and given the support they need in order to do their job and not be exposed to risks which would occur were they not adequately funded and supported.

It has been 5 years since we were attacked. That is the good news, that we have not been attacked for 5 years. Obviously, some of that is good fortune and luck, I suspect. But a lot of that is the result of a policy which has essentially said we are going to find the terrorists before they can find us, and we are going to bring them to justice. And we are going to also try to initiate a process where we establish, in the Middle East, an attitude that respects democracy, respects individual rights, respects the rights of women, and respects the approach of a marketplace economy.

In Iraq, we have attempted to accomplish that, and much has occurred in Iraq that has been good, although, obviously, there is a lot there that has occurred that has been unfortunate, and there have been mistakes made. But the fact is, they have gone through major election processes. They have elected a government. They have had a number of elections, where a large percentage of the population participated. Women have been allowed out of the household and are participating in society.

It remains, however, a nation which is torn by religious strife and cultural and deep ethnic differences. We have not been successful in being able to resolve that and nor have the Iraqi people been able to do that through their democratic process.

But the question becomes for us—in light of the President's request that there be an increase of troops, called the surge, of potentially 20,000 troops, especially concentrated in the Baghdad area, to try to bring more stability to that region—how do we approach this as we move down the road?

Well, I think we have to, as we approach this, keep in context what is our goal. Our goal is to protect us—America—from attacks by radical fundamental Islamic movements and individuals, terrorists specifically, and to

make sure our troops, who are in the field, are adequately protected and have the support they need in order to do their job correctly.

A precipitous, immediate pullout, which is the proposal that has come from the other side in a number of different scenarios, would, I suspect, lead to a number of results which would not be acceptable to us and would undermine our basic purpose, which is to protect America from further attack and to protect our soldiers who are in the field protecting us.

How do you manage a precipitous pullout that does not immediately lead to chaos in Iraq, where the sectarian and religious violence has escalated dramatically, where the potential that a client state of Iran will be set up, at least over a portion of Iraq, where safe havens will occur and result for al-Qaida in other portions of Iraq, and where even greater numbers of people—even though that may seem hard to understand—but where even greater numbers of people may die in Iraq, where a massive civil war, potentially in catastrophic proportions in relation to the population there, will precipitate?

I do not see how you avoid those occurrences if you immediately withdraw. An immediate withdrawal also leads to the issue of what happens to the troops who are left behind. You cannot get 130,000 troops out of Iraq overnight. It is going to take, even under the scenario laid out here by the Democratic leadership, 8 to 12 months to accomplish that. And if you are doing that in a compressed time—as is proposed by the recent language that has been put forward by some of our colleagues—if you compress that time, you are going to leave some troops behind at significant risk, much more significant risk than if they have the support mechanisms they need in order to do the job right.

Is the surge the right approach? Is this concept of 20,000 troops going to resolve this? Is that going to lead us to an Iraq that is more stable? I do not know the answer to that question. I have deep reservations that that is going to accomplish that goal. I have to admit, I suspect if we are able to stabilize certain sections of Baghdad, divided into nine districts, as is proposed—stabilize them in sequence or in parallel—that as you stabilize one district, you are going to push the people who are causing the problems into another place. It is not as if they are going to disappear or even probably be, for the most part, corralled. They are simply going to move.

So I am not sure it is going to accomplish its goal. But I do know this: It is the proposal put forward by the people who are on the ground and to whom we have given the responsibility of trying to address this issue of how you deal with an Iraq in the context of the problems which it has. To take the other option is to lead inevitably to a dramatic problem that will be immediate, both for us as a nation, because it will give potentially safe haven to al-Qaida and create an Iran client state, and it

will also lead to what I suspect would be a huge explosion in the area of civil war.

So although I have reservations, I, also, am not about to vote to cut off the support for the troops who are in the field. Now, I do not command those troops. I am a Senator. I am not the commander of the troops. The President is Commander in Chief. He has literally the unilateral authority to pursue this course of action, unless we vote as a Senate to cut off funding. And the practical implications of us doing that would mean that troops in the field would not have the money they need in order to undertake their own protection. That would be the result of us cutting off funds.

That is a vote I am never going to take or support because the first obligation we have is to those soldiers who are in the field. You may disagree with the Commander in Chief's position, but I do not think that as people who are charged with the responsibility of funding the troops in the field, that you take that disagreement to the point of putting them at risk. So that would not be a vote that I think would be a good vote for us, as a Congress, to take.

But it appears to me—listening to the debate as it has evolved here—there are some who wish to have it sort of both ways. They want to be able to say one thing but not do what they say. I almost am of the view that we should engage this at the level of substance, and we should have that vote. I am not going to vote for it, but we should have that vote. We should say: OK, if it is the position of the Democratic Party that they want to cut off funds to the troops in the field, if they feel that should be the course of action, so be it.

I happen to be attracted, more appropriately, or more positively, to the proposals of the Iraq Study Group. I think they have laid out a blueprint for us to pursue. I am not sure that is going to lead to anything that fundamentally resolves the problem in Iraq, as the problem in Iraq is religious and it is ethnic and it is cultural and it goes back a long way. But at least they have laid out a roadmap. I will not use that word because that word, obviously, has other implications. They have laid out a blueprint we can pursue and I believe we should pursue.

I, for example, think we should engage both Iran and Syria in diplomacy. I agree with former Secretary of State Baker on that point. The way you engage them—of course, that does not instantaneously give them credibility, but there are ways to engage governments that are so antithetical to us, as has been shown over the years, without giving them inordinate credibility as a result of that engagement. And I think that is appropriate.

So there are processes we could follow. But we have to, under any circumstances, get back to what is our basic purpose, I believe, as governors—and I use that term in the generic sense—and it is, A, No. 1, to protect

this Nation from another attack. And that means finding the terrorists before they find us and bringing them to justice. And the effort in Iraq was a legitimate and appropriate effort to try to support the construction of a state in the middle of the Middle East which would subscribe to democratic values, which would give its people the opportunity to have a pluralistic society, where individuals are respected, especially women, and as a result to build a center from which we would have the capacity to undermine the Islamic fundamentalist movement's philosophy that Western values are fundamentally at variance with the Muslim religion and the Muslim way of life. And I believe that is still a legitimate and valued purpose.

But it all comes back to how it protects us. And it protects us by creating an atmosphere where we can go to the Muslim world and say we are not your enemy, but we are actually an opportunity for you to have a better lifestyle, if you follow the course of action of liberty, freedom, individual rights, rights for women, and a market-oriented approach. That protects us. And that should be our first goal: the protection of America from further attack.

We should respect the fact that this administration has succeeded for 5 years in protecting us. Some of that is good fortune, as I said, but a lot of it is the fact that we have reached beyond our borders to find them before they could find those who wish to do us harm.

The second purpose must be to make sure the troops who are in the field have the support they need, not only financial and technical and logistical support but the moral support they need, so they know they are fighting for what is an American cause and is going to keep America safe—which they are. And we need to respect them. They are extraordinary young men and women who are on the frontlines of this war against terrorism and who are doing exceptional service for us.

So that is a brief outline of my thoughts on this matter. I notice, in the concurrent resolution which was submitted by some of our colleagues, they stated that the primary objective of the strategy of the United States in Iraq should be to have the Iraq political leaders make political compromise necessary to end the violence in Iraq. That is an objective, but that is not our primary objective. To make compromise? Whom are they going to compromise with, al-Qaida? Are they going to compromise with Iran?

That is not our objective. Our objective is to, hopefully, have an Iraq that is democratic, is pluralistic, and that is reasonably stable, that is not a client state of Iran, that is not a safe haven for al-Qaida.

Our primary purpose in Iraq is to create an atmosphere in the Middle East

where people will look at democracy, at liberty and say: It works. Even though I am Muslim, that works for me as a Muslim—where women have a chance to pursue their options, where market forces work.

Our other primary purpose in Iraq must be to make sure our soldiers, who are fighting for us and protecting us and who are engaged there, are properly supported as long as they are there. Our Commander in Chief has made a decision to move additional troops in there; and that those troops are equally supported.

It is, obviously, a difficult and torturous issue for us as a nation because we are a good nation. We do believe genuinely—I ask unanimous consent for an additional 5 minutes.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, will the Senator from New Hampshire yield for a question?

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, if I could complete a quick thought and then turn to the Senator for his question, my thought was this: This is obviously a torturous issue for us as a nation, because we are basically a very good people. And our history shows that when we use force, we use it for the purposes of trying to free people, of giving people more options and a better lifestyle. We did it during World War I and World War II, and we did it throughout the Cold War. Our success is extraordinary. We have never sought territorial gain, and we do not. We seek to give people the opportunity to pursue the liberties and freedoms which were defined so brilliantly by our Founding Fathers. When we see something such as Iraq, where there seems to be such an inability of the culture to grasp these concepts, even though we are trying as hard as we can to give them that option, it is difficult.

But we still can't take our eye off the ball, which is to basically recognize that we are doing this for our national defense, as we try to stabilize a region that represents an immediate threat to us and has already damaged us more than any other event in our history has damaged us, other than potentially Pearl Harbor, and that we have troops in the field who need to be supported.

I yield to the Senator from Texas for a question.

Mr. CORNYN. I agree with the argument the Senator from New Hampshire has made about the importance of our prosecuting the war against terror and particularly what has been called by the terrorists themselves “the central front in the war on terror” in Iraq.

Some of our colleagues have introduced a resolution, which the Senator has spoken to, which is a nonbinding sense-of-the-Senate resolution. I heard others this morning talk about imposing caps on the number of troops we might deploy there.

I ask the distinguished Senator from New Hampshire, if it is so important that we not fail in Iraq and that the re-

gion not descend into either a failed state or a launching pad for future terrorist attacks or a regional conflict ensue, does he not believe it would be important for those who criticize the President's announced plan to offer a constructive alternative of their own, if they believe that the President's chosen plan is not the best course of action?

Mr. GREGG. Answering the Senator through the Chair, that seems to me to be the logical approach. As I mentioned earlier, there are some who seem to want the language of opposition but don't want the responsibility of opposition. If the case is that some believe we should have immediate withdrawal, then that ought to be put on the table in a context which would have the force of law and effect, and let us vote on that. I would vote against it, but let us vote on it.

Mr. CORNYN. If the Senator will yield for one final question.

Mr. GREGG. Yes, I yield to the Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Notwithstanding the fact that we have a number of our colleagues running for President of the United States in 2008, and notwithstanding the fact that obviously we have Senators of different party affiliation, Republican and Democrat, isn't a matter of national security exactly the kind of issue that should rise above partisan divisions and upon which we should work to find common ground so we can protect the national security of the United States? I ask the Senator whether he believes that perhaps we have let our guard down and let this discourse become too political in nature rather than solution oriented?

Mr. GREGG. Responding to the Senator through the Chair, the Senator makes a good point. My big concern goes to the morale of the troops in the field. What are they thinking? What are they thinking as a young 19-, 20-, 22-year-old soldier in Iraq today when they hear this discourse going forward and they are asked to go out on patrol, and they are told that maybe the troops their military leadership says it needs to support them is an issue? It is a legitimate issue as to how long we should allow this to hang out there. Let's have the debate. Let's resolve our national position as to what it is going to be, at least for the next year, if we get that far, and resolve it so that we know where we are; otherwise, we do harm to our national policy, because it is so disruptive to have this many voices at the same time claiming legitimacy and, more importantly, it does harm to our troops in the field, which is my primary concern.

I thank the Senator from Texas for his questions and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized to

speak for up to 10 minutes, followed by the Senator from Michigan for 10 minutes, followed by the Senator from Colorado for 10 minutes.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I appreciate the comments made by the Senator from New Hampshire, Mr. GREGG, with regard to his concerns about the public debate in this body on the progress of the war against terrorism and, specifically, the role of the conflict in Iraq. I have to express some deep concern that on an issue so important to our national security, on the type of matter where we have historically said partisan differences should not extend beyond our shorelines, that we ought to try to work harder to find some solution to this problem for our country. I couldn't agree more with the Senator from New Hampshire: This is a matter of America's national interest and America's national security. That is our No. 1 responsibility. That ought to be our focus. We ought to focus on that like a laser and not be distracted by anything else.

I have heard, in addition to nonbinding sense-of-the-Senate resolutions being offered, expressing disapproval of the President's proposed plan, suggestions this morning by the Senator from Illinois that he wants to put a cap on the number of troops that can be deployed in the battlefield. Perhaps there will be other efforts that come forward to try to one-up the other proposal, to micromanage the conduct of this very grave and serious matter which so directly affects our national security. While I disagree fundamentally that we ought to have any suggestion to our troops and to those who are in harm's way that we are going to undermine their efforts by cutting off funds to support our troops during a time of war or whether we are going to send nonbinding sense-of-the-Senate resolutions in a way that will only encourage our enemies and undermine our war effort, or whether we are going to try to micromanage the conduct of the war rather than to rely upon the senior military leadership who has advised the President and been so much a part of the proposal that the President has made, I think this is all extraordinarily premature.

I hope if there is one thing we can all agree on, it is that we have a chance to be successful in Iraq. I know there are those who differ on what success would mean. The President has talked in impressive terms about his vision of establishing a democratic beachhead in Iraq in an area with too few democracies, because the fact is, democracies don't wage war against other democracies. It would be helpful to the long-term stability of the Middle East if that were successful. But I hear people giving up on that vision and saying: Well, the most we can hope for is what the Iraq Study Group said, which is to provide an Iraq that can be sustained, governed, and defended by the Iraqi people.