

are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. BINGAMAN. I yield the floor.

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

IRAQ

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I relish this opportunity. We have before us in the Senate this week, and probably next week, Department of Defense reauthorization, a reauthorization that is critically important because our men and women are deployed around the world carrying out critical missions.

The Department of Defense reauthorization does some interesting and some good things: an across-the-board 3.5-percent increase in the pay for our men and women in the Armed Forces; an increase in our manning document for the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Army to increase our authorized levels; an important increase in funding and capital for those bases and those States and those communities affected by the most recent BRAC, which it is critically important to see to it, as we reposition our military domestically, that those communities that are affected have the capital and the resources to improve their infrastructure to meet that pressure. Equally important is legislation included that was introduced by Senator CHAMBLISS of Georgia, cosponsored by myself, to accelerate retirement benefits for Guardsmen and Reservists deployed in combat, to let their deployments, as they increase, accelerate the time in which they become eligible for their retirement. These are all great benefits.

Unfortunately, we have no debate on the benefits, nor the need. We continue to debate a question that was on the floor most of the month of May when we did the Iraq emergency supplemental, a debate that is scheduled following the report of General Petraeus in September. But for a reason not sure to me, except political, we debate today something we have already debated once before and will debate again in 60 days and that is the issue of whether we do a precipitous, dangerous, scheduled withdrawal from the overall battle in Iraq today.

I wish to address the Levin-Reed amendment from two perspectives. First is the role of Iraq and its battle in the overall global war on terror, and secondly, the consequences of a scheduled, timed, precipitous withdrawal from that battle. First of all, in terms of beginning to withdraw in 120 days and being out by April, you send the clear signal to those we are in combat with today, which is al-Qaida and the insurgencies in Iraq—the enemies of freedom and liberty around the world—you have scheduled the fact that we, in fact, are leaving. You have offered them the opportunity, which they will seize, to declare victory. In the end,

the danger to America and the free world is far greater following that than it is carrying out the tough battle we have today.

I am reluctant to quote anything Osama bin Laden would ever say, but in one of his speeches following the declared fatwah against freedom in the West and America, he said simply: People will follow the strong horse. That is exactly what they will do if we retreat. We may, in fact, have to change our strategy. We may, in fact, reposition ourselves, but we owe it to ourselves to do it when our generals have reported back on their scheduled time. We do it on our timetable and not as a retreat but as a strategy change. We did it earlier this year and are now in the early stages of its implementation.

From a historical perspective, I wish to remind all of us what happened in the last 50 years of the last century. Two great Presidents, one a Republican and one a Democrat, both were confronted with difficult times that threatened America and democracy as we know it: John Kennedy, when the Soviet Union put missiles on the Cuban island and, secondly, when the Iranians took our people as hostages, communism was flourishing and Ronald Reagan was elected and had the will and the courage to confront both. The results of the Cuban Missile Crisis were we did not blink. President Kennedy blockaded the island of Cuba, Khrushchev threatened, but he blinked and they withdrew and missiles are not 90 miles off our shore today. In the case of Iran, and their taking our hostages, and in the case of the Soviet Union, President Reagan stood before the world and said: "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." Then he had the intestinal fortitude, through the appropriations, to build up our military and the proposal of a mutually shared defense of the United States of America and the free world to finally get the Soviet Union to back away from communism, back down from the Cold War, and today we have a much safer world.

The enemy we face today in the terrorists is no less a threat; they are greater. The policy change our President made in 2001, 9 days after the attack on 9/11, to change it from a reaction to a preemption was precisely right, and the global war on terror and its central battle in Iraq which has been declared so by al-Qaida is, in fact, a necessary preemption in terms of terrorism.

The second point is the consequences of withdrawing precipitously and on a posted schedule. No. 1, before the Foreign Relations Committee, every expert from a Democrat to a Republican, Colin Powell to Madeleine Albright; every institute, every think tank, every foreign Middle Eastern expert said the following: We don't know if the surge will work or what its success will be, but we will tell you this: if the United States withdraws, there will be an outright civil war in the Middle East, hundreds of thousands may die

and, quite frankly, millions could, in an uncontrolled, difficult time. If there is one place in the world where that type of turmoil threatens the security of all freedom and all mankind, it is the Middle East. Withdrawal in that case is absolutely the wrong thing to do.

Secondly, when the Mujahedin and terrorists ran the Russians out of Afghanistan, they created a safe haven for terror from which the ultimate 9/11 attack came at America 20 years later. We should not think for a minute that if we leave Iraq, left to the insurgency and the terrorists, the same would not happen. But it wouldn't be 20 years before the attack came against America; it might be a matter of months. It is important for us to continue to pursue the goals of the surge, give the President the chance to make the report this Thursday, General Petraeus the chance to make the report this September, and then have a debate; not in advance of the facts but after we know the facts as they stand. This is too important. This is too important for America.

September 15 is an important date for us to judge the success of our brave men and women who are carrying out the surge today. To declare a retreat today on a timed, precipitous schedule is wrong for America, it is wrong for our effort in the war on terror, and it strikes a dagger in the heart of our new found policy of preemption.

So I appreciate the time the Senate has afforded me this morning. In closing, I ask unanimous consent that a column on this very issue written by Tony Blankley and appearing around the United States today, being syndicated, be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From MDJOnline.com, Jul. 11, 2007]

SENATE FAILS TO ADDRESS THE REAL QUESTION ABOUT WAR IN IRAQ

The Senate is emitting an embarrassing level of emotional policy twitching on the topic of Iraq. Sen. Harry Reid can't take the war anymore. He "knows" it is lost. Sen. Olympia Snowe has just about had it with the Iraqi government. If they don't meet her benchmarks—that's it. Sen. Mitch McConnell thinks "that the handwriting is on the wall that we are going in a different direction in the fall, and I expect the president to lead it." Who authored that wall graffiti, he doesn't say. After talking with grieving family members of one of our fallen warriors, Sen. Pete Domenici "wants a new strategy for Iraq."

I haven't seen such uncritical thinking since I hid under my bed sheets to get away from the monsters back when I was 3 years old.

Whether they are talking about war weariness, grief over casualties, fear of their upcoming elections, disappointment with the current Iraqi government or general irritation with the incumbent president: What in the world do such misgivings of U.S. senators have to do with whether we should continue to advance our vital national security interests?

None of these senators have even addressed the question of whether the United States is

safer if we leave Iraq than if we stay. Isn't that the key question? The question is not whether the Iraqi government deserves American sacrifice on their behalf.

Our sons and daughters are not fighting, being grievously wounded and dying for Iraq—but for American vital interests. If this were just about Iraqi democracy, I might join the screaming for a quick exit.

But if al Qaeda can plausibly claim they drove America out of Iraq (just as they drove the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan), they will gain literally millions of new adherents in their struggle to destroy America and the West. We will then pay in blood, treasure and future wars vastly more than we are paying today to manage and eventually win our struggle in Iraq.

Our staying power, unflinching persistence in the face of adversity, muscular capacity to impose order on chaos and eventual slaughtering of terrorists who are trying to drive us out will do more to win the "hearts and minds" of potentially radical Islamists around the world than all the little sermons about our belief in Islam as the religion of peace. As bin Laden once famously observed—people follow the strong horse.

We have two choices: Use our vast resources to prove we are the strong horse or get ready to be taken to the glue factory.

Even Bush's war critics who specialize in Middle East affairs (such as the Brookings Institute) believe that the immediate chaos in the Middle East that will follow our premature departure would likely involve not only regional war there, a new base for al Qaeda, but also a nuclear arms race that would quickly result in the world's most unstable region—which possesses the world's oil supply—armed with nuclear weapons on a hair trigger.

But the debate today in Washington is about none of these strategic concerns. It is exclusively about Washington's political timetable and when the president will bend to such political necessity. For self-admitted politics—rather than national security—to be driving decision making in wartime Washington is not only an unpatriotic disgrace—it is a national menace.

Imagine the following fanciful discussion in April 1943:

FDR: "Ike, you're going to have to get the Normandy Invasion completed by June this year."

Ike: "But I need at least another year to assemble troops and materiel, establish logistics and strategy and train the men for the battle."

FDR: "Sorry. Several senators are feeling very uncomfortable with the war. Frankly, they have just had it. And several of them are worried about their re-election."

Ike: "My men are fighting and dying for yards in Italy right now—and even so, they can't wait to take the war to Hitler next year in France. Tell those pantywaisted senators to unloosen their girdles, take an aspirin and go to bed—and leave the fighting to my men."

FDR: "But we could lose the Senate."

Ike: "Better to lose the Senate than the war."

FDR: "I'm with you, Ike. You beat Hitler, and let me beat the Senate."

Ike: "My men thank you, Mr. President." Of course, it is an absurdity to imagine such a conversation would have been possible during WWII. And it is a tragedy and disgrace that we are, in fact, having precisely such a conversation today.

But the worm will surely turn. And senators who today proudly call for retreat will then be hiding their faces in shame. And deservedly so. And the public will remember.

Mr. ISAKSON. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Hampshire is recognized.

MINORITY RIGHTS

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I so greatly admire the Senator from Georgia, and his words are so well spoken, I hope people will take them to heart. I also wish to rise on this issue. Before I do that, I wish to speak briefly on the issue pending, which is the cloture motion on the amendment from the Senator from Virginia, Senator WEBB. I haven't decided how to vote on the amendment of the Senator from Virginia. I have an immense amount of respect for the Senator, the former Secretary of the Navy, whom I greatly admire for his service to this country, but I am deeply concerned by the process which is being used.

It has always been the tradition of this Senate that there would be side-by-side votes. It used to be, when I first arrived, that there were actually second-degree votes, and then we got to a position where everybody knew if you had a second degree, you could always get to the first-degree vote, so you gave people side-by-side votes. Unless the issue is on the fundamental question of an overriding bill, the use of cloture for the purposes of cutting off the debate to that amendment has not occurred around here. This is an attempt to basically make the Senate operate as if it had the autocratic Rules Committee of the House, and it is wrong. It is just plain wrong.

The minority should be afforded the right—and has the right—to assert an amendment to an amendment offered on this floor. It has the right to a second degree if it wishes to, and then the author of the first degree has the right to position himself or herself so he or she can bring that amendment back up. As an alternative to that, the offer of a side by side is the way you resolve the issue. That offer was made to allow a side by side on the amendment of the Senator from Virginia. It was rejected, as I understand it. That is what this cloture vote, for me, is about. It is not about the credibility—not the credibility—it is not about the appropriateness or the correctness of the underlying amendment of the Senator from Virginia; it is about whether the minority has the procedural right to assert its standing as a functioning entity within the body and, therefore, the ability to amend or at least have a side-by-side amendment when amendments are brought to the floor on which there may be other views.

So that is why I intend to vote against cloture. It is not to extend the debate; it is not to, in some way, undermine the bill or even to undermine the amendment; it is to make sure that the rights of the minority are protected in this institution where the rights of the minority are the essence of the way this institution functions.

WITHDRAWAL FROM IRAQ

Mr. GREGG. On the question of Iraq, and specifically as I have my own amendment which I will be offering—it is not my amendment; I have an amendment in which I am joined by other Members, including Senator SALAZAR, on how to proceed in Iraq, and we will be talking about that later—maybe even later today—I wish to speak briefly on an amendment being offered by Senator REID and Senator LEVIN which fixes a timeframe for withdrawal that is arbitrary and which is condensed. That timeframe, as I understand it, would occur within 6 months, when there would be a withdrawal. There are no underlying policy proposals which say that the Government of Iraq has to be a functioning government and has to have the capacity to secure itself and has to have the capacity to maintain stability in order for the withdrawal to occur; the withdrawal simply is going to occur. I think the practical implications for that are pretty staggering and not constructive to the process, quite honestly. I think a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq, which has no underlying policy and which leaves behind a stable government or attempts to leave behind a stable government, will inevitably lead to a desperate government, which will, in turn, lead to chaos, and chaos in Iraq is not in our national interests.

We have to remember what the stakes are. Our purpose of being in Iraq is fundamentally to protect ourselves as a nation. The people who wish to do us harm—and they have made it clear they intend to do us harm and they have done us harm—intend to use their ability to attack the United States as the essence of their war on us. The way you keep them from attacking our Nation is to find them where they are and attack them and to make it very difficult for them to have a safe haven and to disrupt their activities and to find them before they can attack us. That is our philosophy. It is a philosophy which is totally appropriate to the war that we now find ourselves engaged in.

This is not a conventional situation. We are not fighting a nation state. We are fighting individuals who subscribe to a philosophy which says they will have a better afterlife if they destroy Western culture and specifically kill Americans and destroy America. That is their purpose. They have said that and they have done it. Let's not be naive about this. Let's not look at this through rose-colored glasses and say they wish some other outcome and if we are nice to them they will go away; that if we ignore them, they will ignore us. That is not the case.

So we have pursued a policy in Iraq and across the world of finding them before they find us. If Iraq, because of a precipitous withdrawal which leaves no stability behind, is allowed to devolve into chaos, it is very obvious what is going to happen. Besides a civil