

assets as Special Forces units and unmanned aircraft to the Persian Gulf to prepare for what was an inevitable war.

Five years later, we are still living with the consequences of this administration's rush to war in Iraq. Afghanistan teeters on collapse, with the drug trade resurgent and Taliban forces controlling more and more territory. Pakistan remains dysfunctional, with a difficult transition of power occurring now and an extremist insurgency taking root in its border regions. Iran has grown immeasurably stronger over the past 5 years, taking advantage of America's inattention to move forward on its nuclear program and support extremist groups throughout the Middle East. And what we can never forget, the men who perpetrated the most deadly attacks on American soil remain free 7 years after the fact. This is not only a slap in the face to the families of the 3,000 Americans murdered on September 11, it remains a continuing danger as al-Qaida plots new attacks on our Nation.

In his speech today at the National Defense University, the President made the following assertion:

Together, with our allies, we made substantial progress towards breaking up terrorist networks—and we will not rest until they are destroyed.

We have heard similar statements from President Bush and senior administration officials dating back to 2002—that America is taking the fight to al-Qaida and winning the war on terrorism. The only problem is the administration has never defined what victory means nor provided a set of benchmarks to allow the American people to judge whether we are making real progress.

For that reason, I am joined today by Senator HAGEL in introducing an amendment to the Defense authorization bill to require the executive branch to produce, on a semiannual basis, a comprehensive report on the status of our Nation's efforts and the level of resulting progress to defeat al-Qaida and related affiliates in the global war on terrorism. The Congress receives numerous reports on the status of our efforts in individual theaters, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, but we have never received a basic update from the administration on what the United States is doing to ensure that al-Qaida never again succeeds in launching the type of devastating attacks such as those we suffered 7 years ago this week. This amendment, if adopted, would allow the Congress and the American people to hold administration officials—this or future administration officials—accountable when they claim we are winning against al-Qaida.

Let me briefly conclude by returning to a topic on which I have spoken previously on this floor—the danger of nuclear terrorism. Tomorrow, a high-level panel convened by the Partnership for a Secure America, consisting of some of the men and women who

served on the 9/11 Commission, will release a report card on America's efforts to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and prevent a catastrophic act of terrorism involving such weapons on American soil. Press reports indicate the final grades will not be good. Our Government will receive an overall grade of C, with sharp criticism focused on our lack of a coherent governmentwide strategy, our acute vulnerability to an act of bioterrorism, and our continuing failure to secure loose fissile materials and nuclear stockpiles around the world.

Four years ago, this President declared in a campaign debate that he agreed with his opponent that the prospect of a nuclear weapon destroying an American city is the single greatest threat to U.S. national security. Yet while there have been useful efforts in recent years, it remains clear the U.S. Government has not marshaled all of its resources to combat this threat. For instance, we have spent more funds securing our aviation system against another hijacking than preventing a future act of nuclear terrorism. However, I fear when al-Qaida strikes our Nation the next time, they will not be using their old playbook.

America stands today less secure than it should be. Our massive military presence in Iraq, now approaching its seventh year, has strained our most precious resources—our men and women in uniform. It has reduced our flexibility to respond to various other threats throughout the world, including Russia's recent military incursion into Georgia, and emboldened other enemies—Iran most notably. We have failed to finish the job we started in Afghanistan. For too long, we tolerated a dictator in Pakistan on the basis that he was best equipped to serve as an ally in the war on terrorism, only to find out al-Qaida had reconstituted its central headquarters in that very nation.

The President and those who seek to continue his policies indefinitely will make speeches all week long that we are winning the war on terror. But they make those statements in direct contradiction to the assessments of our intelligence community, and they fail to offer the evidence to back up their assertions. Enough is enough. We cannot afford to continue the same misguided policies that have made America less safe for another 4 years.

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

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, with the consent of the Republican leader, I ask unanimous consent that the motion

and pending amendments be set aside so the Senate may consider the following first-degree amendments; that no amendments be in order to the amendments prior to a vote; and that any debate time provided under the agreement be equally divided and controlled in the usual form; that if a sequence of votes is established under the provisions of a separate consent, then there be 2 minutes equally divided and controlled prior to any vote; and that in any sequence the succeeding votes be 10 minutes in limitation:

Leahy amendment regarding statute of limitations, the Vitter amendment regarding missile defense with 2 hours of debate, the Nelson of Florida amendment regarding SBP-DIC offset, and the Kyl amendment regarding X-ban radar.

Further, that during Wednesday's session, the ban on motions to proceed continue to be in effect.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 5323

Mr. LEVIN. And now, Mr. President, I call up the Leahy amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Michigan [Mr. LEVIN], for Mr. LEAHY, for himself, and Mr. BYRD, proposes an amendment numbered 5323.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide for a suspension of certain statutes of limitations when Congress has authorized the use of military force)

At the end of subtitle G of title X, add the following:

SEC. 1083. SUSPENSION OF STATUTES OF LIMITATIONS WHEN CONGRESS AUTHORIZES THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE.

Section 3287 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting “or Congress has enacted a specific authorization for the use of the Armed Forces, as described in section 5(b) of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1544(b)),” after “is at war”;

(2) by inserting “or directly connected with or related to the authorized use of the Armed Forces” after “prosecution of the war”;

(3) by striking “three years” and inserting “5 years”;

(4) by striking “proclaimed by the President” and inserting “proclaimed by a Presidential proclamation, with notice to Congress.”; and

(5) by adding at the end the following: “For purposes of applying such definitions in this section, the term ‘war’ includes a specific authorization for the use of the Armed Forces, as described in section 5(b) of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1544(b)).”

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, for Members' information, in view of the agreement we have received, there will be no further votes today.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we now go

into a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for 10 minutes.

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

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized for 15 minutes, if I could.

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

Mr. GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. President.

IRAQ

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise in support of S. Res. 636 that Senator LIEBERMAN will be trying to introduce tomorrow. It is a resolution of the Senate, and he will be trying to introduce it tomorrow. I am going to speak on it tonight. I am a coauthor of it. It speaks about the phenomenal success of the surge, of troops into Iraq. But it is more than just a surge of 30,000 troops. It has been a surge on many fronts: political, economic, and militarily. The resolution would be a statement by the Senate recognizing that the surge has worked, that those who executed the strategy are recognized for being the great leaders they are, it is a compliment to our troops, and it is also a recognition that the Iraqi people have stepped to the plate and changed the tides that existed in their country of extremism and Iraq now is becoming a stable government, a country where people are working out their differences through the rule of law and representative democracy, and al-Qaida has been delivered a dramatic blow.

To put this in perspective, at the end of 2006, it was clear the old strategy was not working, that the troops we had in Iraq were not being used in a way to counter the insurgency and were not enough in number. All this came to a head in late 2006 when Senator MCCAIN, myself, and Senator LIEBERMAN, among others, were arguing for a change in strategy.

We had, I think, seven visits to Iraq; at the time about four. During our visits—Senator MCCAIN, myself, and Senator LIEBERMAN—every time we went, it was worse than the time before, up until the surge became the new strategy. The sergeants, the colonels, and captains were very blunt with us, saying this was not working. It was clear to us we did not have the right number of troops or the right strategy. In January of 2007, President Bush, much to his credit, announced a new strategy,

an infusion of, I think, 30,000 new combat brigades into Iraq to bring about security.

It has always been our belief—Senator MCCAIN, myself, and Senator LIEBERMAN—that without security, it is hard to have a representative democracy. It is one thing to talk about political compromise and the difficulty of talk radio and MoveOn.Org. But it is another thing to talk about political compromise when your family is being murdered. It is very hard to administer the rule of law when the judges and the prospective participants in the trial are under siege and under attack. So without better security, there was no hope.

I have always believed that a security environment is required before you can have political compromise, economic progress, or any forgiveness. The economic progress in Iraq is pretty stunning: 5 percent growth. The oil revenues have almost doubled. Oil production has almost doubled. The economy is doing very well in Iraq compared to a year ago. The availability of energy and power is dramatically up. So the everyday life of the Iraqi people is still a struggle and difficult but far better than it was a year ago. There are a lot of people purchasing refrigerators and televisions and other electronic devices. The availability of power is at an all-time high. But demand is also at an all-time high.

Economically, inflation is down and the Iraqis have a surplus. People say: Well, should they pay us back? I would like to get some of our money back. They are certainly paying more. They are paying for all major reconstruction projects now, and they are paying for the operation of their army, for the most part.

But the best way to pay us back as a nation is for Iraq to be a place that embraces democracy, rejects al-Qaida, would be a buffer to Iranian ambitions, would be a place where a woman would have a say about her child. All that, to me, is priceless. For Iraq to go from a Saddam Hussein dictatorship to a representative government where Sunnis, Shias, and Kurds live in peace with each other, at peace with their neighbors is a major sea change in the overall war on terror and is a priceless event as far as I am concerned.

To have an Arab nation in the heart of the Mideast, a Muslim nation that rejected al-Qaida, is exactly what we need more of. The Iraqi people need to be acknowledged as to their sacrifice. What they have done has been tough. Their casualty rate has been about three times ours. The political reconciliation progress is moving forward now in Iraq. Fifteen of the 18 political benchmarks have been met by the Iraqi Government. The debaathification law was passed. That allows members of the Baath Party under Saddam to come back into the Government and get some of their old jobs back.

The amnesty law was passed. That means Sunni insurgents who were cap-

tured a year or 2 years ago as part of the insurgency to topple the Government in Baghdad will be let go and go back home and become part of the new Iraq.

Forgiveness is required before you have reconciliation. You see throughout Iraq a level of forgiveness that I think is encouraging. For the Shias and the Kurds to pass the amnesty law, telling their Sunni brothers and sisters: Let's start over, is a major step forward. For the Sunnis to embrace new elections after they boycotted them in 2005 is a recognition by the Sunni factions in Iraq that democracy is the way to go: Go to Baghdad through representation, not through violence. The Kurds have created stability in the north, and they are working with their partners in the south and in the west with the Sunnis and the Shias.

Maliki has stepped to the plate. I was not so excited about his leadership a year ago, but he has turned things around. The Shia-dominated Government in Iraq is taking on Shia militias in the southern part of Iraq, in the Basra area, that have been supported by Iranian special groups. The knock on Maliki was: Well, he is a sectarian leader. The fact that he would take on al-Sadr and Shia-backed militias from Iran—Iranian-backed militias in his own country—is a sign that he does not want to be dominated by Iranian theology.

So I am hopeful more so now than ever that Iraq has turned a corner economically, politically, and militarily. Their army is 100,000 stronger than it was before the surge, and they performed well after a slow start in the southern part of Iraq against the Shia militias, and they are fighting very well in Mosul.

One of the most stunning events and turnarounds, I believe, has been the recent handing over of Anbar Province back to the Iraqis. About 2 years ago, Anbar was declared lost. It was an al-Qaida stronghold—the Sunni part of Iraq—where al-Qaida was going up and down the streets of Ramadi holding a parade. And it was a very tough situation in Fallujah.

What happened was a combination of events. The Sunni Iraqis in that part of Iraq, in Anbar, tasted al-Qaida life and did not like it. They joined with the coalition forces and, with the addition of more troops, made a strong stand against al-Qaida. About a week ago, Anbar was turned back over to the Iraqis, and al-Qaida has been delivered a very punishing blow. They are not yet completely defeated, but structurally they are in disarray, and you see the message traffic among al-Qaida operatives that Iraq has been a nightmare for them, and it has turned out to be their Vietnam. At the end of the day, anything that will diminish al-Qaida is good for us. There is no more diminishing event when it comes to al-Qaida than to have fellow Sunni Muslims turn on them.