

But like I said earlier, I don't want to blame anyone today. Certainly, with all the misinformation out there about what I have done and supposedly not done or said during the last few weeks—and I am sure other Senators feel the same—this is not a time to offer a litany of charges with respect to any Member of this body.

My bottom line is this: I hope these efforts, laborious though they have been, can someday soon yield fruit. Toward that end, I thank a number of colleagues. Senator CRAIG has worked in good faith, and certainly closely with me. I hold him in the highest regard. Senator FEINSTEIN, as I have already mentioned, was there night and day working on this issue and I appreciate her efforts. Senator DASCHLE and Senator BINGAMAN went out of their ways to try to accommodate Senator FEINSTEIN and me. For their efforts, I am appreciative, as well.

I chair the Subcommittee on Forests and Public Land Management. In Oregon, we have had tragic fires. I have been consumed by this day after day after day. I wish we were in the Senate today saying we had found the common ground. I think it is possible to do it. The Senate cannot leave this subject for too long and will return to it after this bill is done in some form or another. Too many lives and too many communities will be devastated if the Senate washes its hands of this issue. I am committed to working with all my colleagues, on a bipartisan basis, day after day after day, until this gets done.

I hope one day soon I will be able to come to the floor of the Senate and participate with my colleagues on something that all Members can believe is a positive step forward to make sure these treasures, our forests and lands across this country, are managed properly.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

FORESTS

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I congratulate my colleague from Oregon and my colleague from California for the effort to try to reach a rationalization relative to the decimation of the forests in the Pacific Northwest.

I am frustrated with regard to the extended negotiations associated with forest health. Any Member, if we are stricken, seeks the very best advice. We do not hold a townhall meeting. We seek out a specialist, a specialist who obviously is well trained, a specialist who bears the brunt of a suit if there is malpractice associated with the care given.

If I may draw a parallel, we have very sick forests. They are sick as a consequence of well-meaning environmental pressures to basically terminate access into the forests, which has always been provided by logging. Many people assume that old growth has al-

ways been. They overlook the reality that a forest is similar in many respects to a field of wheat. If it is harvested, it regenerates.

Depending whether selective logging is used or clearcut logging, the appropriate procedure is reforestation. Reforestation occurs by individually planting trees or it can be done by natural reseeding, which is much the case in my State. But we prolong this argument and take it beyond the realm of addressing in a timely manner the necessary correction. The necessary correction associated with our forests as a consequence of the tremendous exposure of fires is the management of underbrush that is predominant in the second growth. If that is not cleared, why, clearly we expose ourselves to complications associated with a huge fire moving through an area very rapidly and the inability to go in and fight it because we have eliminated access in much of our national forest.

So I beseech my colleagues to consider the ramifications. Let's make these decisions not on emotion; let's make them on the best forest management practice. We have foresters who spend a lifetime in the area of forest health. We have to listen to those people; otherwise, we are kidding ourselves and we are kidding the public. We should be taken to task by the public for not directing this corrective result.

While well-meaning environmental groups say let nature take its course, that is not, if you will, in the opinion of many of us, the appropriate procedure. We can help nature. We can help our forests. The forests are there, and we should recognize that we use the forests. They are a place of recreation; they are a place of productivity. If we have fires, we should take what the salvage capabilities are in the forests and move that timber out while it still has some value.

It is very frustrating to the Senator from Alaska. We have fires in the interior. The Tongass is a very wet area and we have few fires. But to see this debate go on and on with no conclusion, no recognition that decisions should be made on the basis of forest health, is extremely frustrating. I hope my colleagues will consider the bottom line. Let's make a decision on what is good for forest health.

DRAFT JOINT RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE USE OF U.S. ARMED FORCES AGAINST IRAQ

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I am going to briefly turn to another matter, and that is the recognition that today OPEC announced they were not going to increase the production of oil from the OPEC nations. What does this mean? It simply means that as we look at going into a showdown with Iraq, the Mideast nations that control oil—basically OPEC—are not going to increase production. That means to the American consumer a continuation of

high gasoline prices, high oil prices, perhaps well beyond \$30 a barrel.

We have seen the development of that cartel over a period of time. It initiated a program that said, in effect, if the price fell below \$22 a barrel, they would reduce supply to stabilize the price. They wanted a price structure of \$22 to \$28. That puts a tremendous burden on the structure of our society and our economy.

It is rather revealing to recognize that as we continue to address our situation with Iraq, we also continue to import oil from Iraq. I think currently we are importing about 600,000 barrels from Iraq each day.

We have delivered from the White House to the Speaker, majority leader, minority leader, as well as the House minority leader, a transmittal, which is the consequences of discussions with the President, identifying a suggested form of resolution with respect to Iraq. I ask unanimous consent this be printed in the RECORD.

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

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, September 19, 2002.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. THOMAS A. DASCHLE,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. TRENT LOTT,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. RICHARD A. GEPHARDT,
Minority Leader, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER HASTERT, LEADER DASCHLE, LEADER LOTT, AND LEADER GEPHARDT, As a follow-up to your discussion yesterday morning with the President, we enclose a suggested form of resolution with respect to Iraq. We stand ready to meet with you or your staffs to discuss our proposal.

As the President indicated to you, it is our hope that we can reach early agreement on the proposal at the leadership level to allow you to proceed to consider the resolution in your respective chambers as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

NICHOLAS E. CALIO,
Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs.

ALBERTO R. GONZALES,
Counsel to the President.

JOINT RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE USE OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES AGAINST IRAQ

Whereas Congress in 1998 concluded that Iraq was then in material and unacceptable breach of its international obligations and thereby threatened the vital interests of the United States and international peace and security, stated the reasons for that conclusion, and urged the President to take appropriate action to bring Iraq into compliance with its international obligations (Public Law 105-235);

Whereas Iraq remains in material and unacceptable breach of its international obligations by, among other things, continuing to possess and develop a significant chemical and biological weapons capability, actively seeking a nuclear weapons capability, and supporting and harboring terrorist organizations, thereby continuing to threaten the national security interests of the United States and international peace and security;