

what he is doing in this area. It is extremely important to the world.

Mr. DEWINE. I thank my colleague.

INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the fiscal year 2004 foreign operations bill includes \$15,004,000 for a U.S. contribution to the International Fund for Agricultural Development, IFAD. Congress has been a strong supporter for IFAD since its inception, and these funds will enable IFAD to continue to expand its programs in the poorest countries.

Unfortunately, the Appropriations Committee report accompanying the bill neglected to address a concern which I suspect is shared by Senators on both sides of the aisle who support IFAD. IFAD is the seventh largest multilateral contributor to the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative, HIPC DI. However, IFAD still does not have access to the core resources of the companion HIPC DI Trust Fund. Currently, IFAD has to absorb 87.2 percent of the cost for participating in HIPC DI, while other multilateral development banks with full access absorb much smaller percentages. For this reason, I urge the administration to work with other donors to enable IFAD to gain access to the core resources of the HIPC Trust Fund.

RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAMS IN RUSSIA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, page 45 of the committee report accompanying the fiscal year 2004 foreign operations bill, Senate Report 108-106, discusses rule of law and human rights programs in Russia. The report mentions the Russian American Judicial Partnership and the Russian American Rule of Law Consortium. The report failed to mention another important program, the American Bar Association's Central and East European Law Initiative, CEELI, which is involved in training Russian lawyers in the adversary system, law school curriculum development, and improvement of gender equity in the legal system. Each of these organizations is doing important work, and we want to be sure that despite the decline in our assistance program in Russia that funding for these types of programs are continued. There is no more effective way for the United States to contribute to the political and economic development of Russia than by strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights.

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, page 16 of the committee report accompanying the fiscal year 2004 foreign operations bill, Senate Report 108-106, discusses the Collaborative Research Support Programs. These programs, which involve 52 U.S. universities, have made immeasurable contributions in developing countries on a wide range of agriculture, environment, nutrition and development issues. USAID funds are leveraged with contributions from the universities and recipient countries.

For fiscal year 2003, the committee recommended funding for the CRSPs at a higher level than in fiscal year 2002. However, despite that recommendation, funding was essentially flat lined. For fiscal year 2004, the committee expresses its strong support for the CRSPs and recommends continued funding. I want to emphasize the importance of the CRSPs to the Congress, to the universities that participate, to the countries that benefit, and to U.S. foreign policy. We want USAID to expand its collaboration with U.S. universities that have research expertise on these issues. By that I mean that funding for the CRSPs should be increasing. An appropriate level for the CRSPs in fiscal year 2004 would be \$25 million. I also urge USAID to seriously consider allocating up to \$2 million to fund and establish a CRSP focused on water security.

AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to clarify a sentence in the committee report, Report 108-106, accompanying S. 1426, the fiscal year 2004 foreign operations bill.

On page 38 of the report, under the heading "Middle East Partnership Initiative," the committee expresses support for using a portion of MEPI funds "for scholarships for needy Muslim students at the American University of Beirut." We do support that, but we intended to also mention the American University in Cairo and the Lebanese American University. Their omission was purely an oversight. I ask my friend from Kentucky, the subcommittee chairman, Senator MCCONNELL, if he agrees with me about this.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I do. My friend from Vermont is correct that this was an oversight. We intended to express support for the use of MEPI funds for scholarships for Muslim students at the other American universities in the Middle East, as well as at the American University of Beirut.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

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

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

IRAQ WAR

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, this morning's Washington Post has a

front-page story entitled "Inquiry Faults Intelligence on Iraq." The sub-headline says, "The Threat From Saddam Hussein Was Overstated, Senate Committee Report Finds."

Many of us who voted against going to war against Iraq believed it was not in the national security interest of the United States to attack Iraq at this moment; that instead we ought to keep our eye on the ball and keep the pressure on al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden because it was al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden who attacked America on September 11, not Iraq.

I think this morning's report has increasing evidence that it was simply a misplaced priority to attack Iraq rather than keeping our full resources directed at taking down al-Qaida and holding Osama bin Laden accountable for his vicious attack on this country.

If we look across the evidence, I believe in many ways the United States simply made a mistake of judgment on what was most important. The President and his advisers believed—and I believe they sincerely believed—that the priority was to go after Iraq. They believed there was some link between Iraq and al-Qaida.

I think the evidence was always very thin for that and, in fact, the more we know, the more clear it is there really were not any strong linkages between Iraq and al-Qaida. In fact, it is unlikely that there would be because Saddam Hussein was secular, Osama bin Laden is a fundamentalist. In many ways, they are enemies; they are at odds.

It is very interesting that if one goes out and tries to ascertain what people of the country think, the polling shows 70 percent of Americans believe Saddam Hussein was behind September 11. Over half believe that Iraqis were the hijackers of the planes.

The fact is, not a single Iraqi was among the hijackers of the airliners that were turned into flying bombs. The vast majority of the 19 hijackers were Saudi Arabians, as, of course, is Osama bin Laden. I think 15 of the 19 were Saudis. Two were from the United Arab Emirates and there were other countries involved as well, but not a single Iraqi. That is the fact.

Another thing, we have now the President himself saying there is no evidence of a Hussein tie to September 11. It is very important we get the facts right when we make these judgments about going to war, especially when we are going to go on a preemptive war, when we attack first, something we have never done in the entire history of the United States. We have never attacked, without somebody attacking us first or attacking our allies first, but in this case we attacked first. As the Intelligence Committee report this morning suggests, we did so based on faulty intelligence and faulty evidence.

Another assertion that was made repeatedly was that there was a terrorist camp in Iraq that members of al-Qaida went to, but we knew then and we know now that that camp is in this

place on the chart, which is the former Ansar al-Islam pocket. It is in Iraq. As this line shows, that camp is in a part of Iraq that Saddam Hussein did not control. In fact, this part of Iraq is controlled by the Kurds. The Kurds are our allies. So once again, this is a disturbing bit of information used in a way that I believe fundamentally misled people.

A second piece of intelligence was that Mohamed Atta, who was among the hijackers, supposedly met with the intelligence chief in Prague, in Czechoslovakia. That charge was repeated over and over.

Our intelligence agencies believe Mr. Atta was not in Prague at the time of that reported meeting. Instead, he was in the United States—again, evidence that simply does not support the case.

What we do know is that Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida organized that attack on the United States. That is who was responsible. That is who we should be going after.

The other thing that was asserted repeatedly was that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. I do not fault the administration for making that case because, frankly, I believed there were probably biological and chemical weapons. I believed it because we know that the previous U.N. inspectors had catalogued weapons of mass destruction, biological and chemical weapons, but that was some years ago. Even then, there was no evidence that those weapons had been destroyed. So even though now we have not found them, I think it is understandable that people believed there were at least chemical and biological weapons.

The Soviet Union had biological and chemical weapons; we never attacked them. China had biological and chemical weapons; we did not attack them. North Korea has weapons of mass destruction, or at least they assert they do. We have not attacked them. In every one of those cases, we used containment. We used patience. We did not attack first.

In the case where we were attacked, we know who did that. It was not Iraq. It was not Iraqis. It was al-Qaida, led by Osama bin Laden.

It has now been 775 days since that attack on our country, and Osama bin Laden is still broadcasting tapes threatening Americans and our allies. It has been 775 days, and we have not brought him to justice. I believe that is the priority. I believe that should be our top goal. I believe we ought to find Osama bin Laden and the rest of the al-Qaida leadership and take them out.

Newsweek ran a story in which they identified a possible location in the Kunar Province between Afghanistan and Pakistan as a place where Osama bin Laden is reported to be hiding. This is a pretty small area of the country of Afghanistan, where they have narrowed it down through their investigative reporting as a place where Osama bin Laden is hiding.

What I find most disturbing is in that story, they said this:

... bin Laden appears to be not only alive, but thriving. And with America distracted in Iraq, and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf leery of stirring up an Islamist backlash, there is no large-scale military force currently pursuing the chief culprit in the 9/11 attacks . . .

I am here today to ask why not? Why is there not a large military force with an operation underway to find Osama bin Laden and to bring him to justice? That ought to be our top priority. If we have been distracted by Iraq, then that is exactly what this Senator feared when I voted against authorizing going to war against Iraq at this time. That is exactly what concerned this Senator, that a preemptive war against Iraq—a country that had a low level of threat against this country, according to our own intelligence agencies—has distracted us from going after the man and the organization that attacked this country. It was not Iraqis who attacked this country; it was al-Qaida that attacked this country. Saddam Hussein was not the leader of that operation, Osama bin Laden was the leader of that operation. It has been 775 days since that vicious attack on this country and we still have not brought him to justice.

What is far more disturbing to me is there is, apparently, no large scale military force currently pursuing the chief culprit in the 9/11 attacks. Why not? I think the American people deserve an answer to that question. I think the Members of this Chamber deserve an answer to that question. Why is there not a large-scale military operation underway to find Osama bin Laden and to hold him to account? That ought to be the priority. That ought to be in the highest interests of the national security of the United States.

Osama bin Laden engineered the attack on this country. I must say, last weekend, to see him in another tape, bragging about the damage he has done to this country—outrageous, absolutely outrageous. Let's go get Osama bin Laden and those who attacked this country. That ought to be our highest national security priority.

I yield the floor and 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. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

DENISE GREENLAW RAMONAS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, the Senate works well when it is served by very competent and dedicated staff members—on our personal staff, the people who operate the elevators, the security people, the policemen, but most importantly our staff at the committee level and here on the floor of the Senate.

Over the past few years, I think most of the staff members know how much I have appreciated their good work because I have taken the time occasionally to say so and because I tried to make the Senate a family-friendly place. Although they may look like just part of the furniture, there are really some fine, dedicated people who spend long hours here who really live outside this Chamber. Sometimes I see members of our floor staff in other parts of the Capitol complex, or at Pentagon City, and I am shocked to see them out of the cave they work in. Far too often, we don't take the time to say "thank you" and "job well done" because you have made us look good, because you have served some State in our great Nation well, and because you made America a better place.

So I am here today to say thank you to one of our dedicated staff members who has now retired and is moving on to her next life—probably the third generation of her very important life—one who has served us well and one whom I will miss seeing on the floor of the Senate every day. That person is Denise Greenlaw Ramonas.

I first got to know Denise because she lives in my neighborhood, but also because she was such a competent assistant to PETE DOMENICI. I noticed her when Senator DOMENICI, one of the most able legislators in this body, would come to the floor to handle a budget resolution or piece of legislation, perhaps from the Subcommittee on Energy that he serves on of the appropriations committee or something on behalf of New Mexico. There was this obviously competent staff member working with him in the Senate. I learned to talk to her and listen to her when she was in the Senate with PETE DOMENICI.

Over the years, I got to know more about Denise. Denise is from Utah. She graduated from the University of Utah College of Law, receiving her juris doctorate degree. She also graduated magna cum laude from undergraduate school. She has had a number of outstanding experiences in her life including serving as a law clerk in a Houston law firm, one of the best in the state, the Boswell, O'Toole and Pickering law firm. She has been an instructor at the University of Utah College of Business. That clearly is an interesting experience. To be an instructor you have to know your subject matter and you get to work with young people. I have learned from personal experience, sometimes hard experience, students are tougher in their questioning than people you might talk to at a chamber of commerce or civic club. Being a professor is a challenge, I am sure.

She has worked for the Department of Business Regulation for the State of Utah. She was an adjunct professor, City College of Chicago, in West Berlin and Weisbaden, Germany. She also has a business on the side selling a line of women's clothes.

Beginning in 1982, she served as legislative assistant to Senator PETE