

most amazing demonstration of human courage I have ever heard. I could scarcely imagine a man who lost three limbs serving in the military in Vietnam, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, who had voted for every single dollar of President Bush's requested military increases for military spending, for homeland security, every dollar, being smeared as an enemy of this Nation along with Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden.

Here they go again, smearing President Clinton and even Senator JOHN KERRY. I heard President Clinton attacked by colleagues across the aisle from the day I joined the Senate Armed Services Committee in January of 2001 for supposed military weaknesses. That continued up until the military that President Clinton commanded for 8 years routed the Taliban and al-Qaida in Afghanistan 10 months later. Now he is accused of emasculating the Intelligence Agency, causing the failures to prevent September 11, 2001, and the failures to inform us properly about the absence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Unfortunately, we cannot find out who is and who is not responsible for whatever failures occurred. We cannot find out because President Bush has blocked the 9/11 Commission access to the information that bipartisan group of distinguished Americans has been requesting for months from the administration.

We will not get to the truth about who misused intelligence information about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq because the President refused to appoint an independent commission, refused to grant them subpoena powers, and refused to authorize them to investigate the use of intelligence in-

formation by himself and his administration.

If the former administration is the one that is so culpable and if the current administration is so blameless, why wouldn't this administration want those two commissions to have access to all relevant information? Why would this administration block the 9/11 information that its cochairman, former Republican Governor of New Jersey, Thomas Kean, has requested for months on behalf of his Commission? Why won't the President allow his own handpicked Commission to assess the misinformation about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq that was provided to Congress and to the American people to investigate all the questions about that colossal misrepresentation of the truth as we later discovered it to be?

Those are critical questions that affect the future safety of our country and our citizens, whatever flaws existed before September 11, whatever errors were made after September 11, whatever mistakes, whatever lack of communication, whatever misreporting, misunderstanding, misrepresenting, exaggerating, or improper influencing of information, whatever or wherever it occurred, which weakened our national security, must know what that was in order to prevent it from ever happening again.

That imperative should transcend partisan politics. It should transcend Presidential reelections. It should transcend any consideration except for the safety of this country and of the American people.

If my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to strengthen our national security, as I know they do—as we all do, because we are Americans first, and we are partisans after that—

then I ask them to join us in insisting that the President unshackle those two commissions. Let them find the truth, the whole truth, whatever it might be, wherever it is, whoever it helps, whoever it hinders, so that we can know what we must do to ensure that the horrors of 9/11 never, ever occur again, and to ensure that the serious misinformation about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, which influenced Members of this body to support a resolution to authorize the President to start a war against that country—to make sure that kind of misinformation used to justify a war to the American people never, ever happens again.

So, yes, let's debate these matters as frequently as possible. Let's get out all of the facts. And then let's let the American people decide.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota yields the floor.

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ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.  
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m., tomorrow morning.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 8:52 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, March 3, 2004, at 9:30 a.m.

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#### NOMINATIONS

Executive nomination received by the Senate March 2, 2004:

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DEBORAH HERSMAN, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 31, 2008. VICE JOHN GOGLIA, TERM EXPIRED.