

include trade barriers against American beef and other agricultural products, and they all demonstrate the European Union relentlessly pursuing these protectionist policies that disproportionately harm America's workers.

The JOBS Act is a bill that is absolutely critical for us to address. As I said, the fact that the Democrats chose to filibuster that bill has been very disappointing to me. It was developed in a strong bipartisan fashion, coming through the Finance Committee with every single Democrat on the committee voting in favor of the bill, including the Democratic leader and the junior Senator from Massachusetts.

It is absolutely essential that we address this bill and that we pass this bill in order to accelerate job creation in this country. The purpose of it is to bring our trade laws in compliance with our trade agreements and at the same time provide some of the badly needed reforms to further stimulate manufacturing growth. I mention both of these issues because I think both need to continue to be addressed. I hope we can work out an appropriate arrangement to address the JOBS bill in the very near future.

I yield the floor, Mr. President.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Virginia.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry. What is the current order?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is in morning business.

The majority controls 9 minutes.

Mr. WARNER. Fine. Thank you. Mr. President, I desire to speak, say, for 7 minutes, and then I would be happy to engage in a colloquy or otherwise with my colleagues on the other side.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. If the Chair would allow me to respond to the Senator from Virginia, the majority has 9 minutes and we have 9 minutes; is that correct?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority has 13½ minutes.

Mr. REID. The minority has what?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority has 13½ minutes.

Mr. REID. So the majority leader used morning business time?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. And the majority's time is currently running.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I say to the distinguished Senator from Virginia, you are to go first today under the order that has been entered, and then we would go next.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority has 8 minutes.

Mr. WARNER. I thank the Chair.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield for a moment. How much time do we have on the majority side?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Eight minutes.

Mr. WARNER. Shall I divide it with my distinguished colleague?

Mr. LOTT. I see Senator ALLARD may wish to speak, too.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, if I may enter into the colloquy, I was asked to make some comments this morning, and I will be glad to do that, but my time is flexible and I can speak just briefly on what has happened to the economy.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority has 7 minutes 30 seconds.

The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I will just take 3 minutes, and then I will yield to my colleague, the distinguished Senator from Colorado.

Mr. ALLARD. I thank the Senator.

U.S. AND COALITION EFFORTS IN IRAQ

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, with enormous enthusiasm and pride I rise today to commend President Bush and his national security team for the continually strong leadership they are providing in the ongoing global war on terrorism, and particularly as they assist the Iraqi people in their imminent transition to sovereignty.

Almost 1 year ago, a coalition of nations, led by the U.S. Armed Forces, and, indeed, those from Great Britain, liberated the Iraqi people from decades of repressive, tyrannical rule at the hands of Saddam Hussein. That day, April 9, will long be celebrated in the history of Iraq.

Our President did the right thing—he did the right thing—in gathering a coalition of nations to rid Iraq of a leader who had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people, who had a regime of over 30 years of tyrannical oppression, murdered indiscriminately. This individual simply had to be brought to the terms of accountability, accountability to his own people. That orderly process is now under way. He defied international law for over 12 years. Clearly America and the world are safer today, and Iraq is a better place with a hopeful future as a result.

Tragically, the effort to make America and the world safer and to defend freedom around the world is not without an enormous cost to this Nation in terms primarily of lost lives and those who bear the scars and the wounds of war, and their families who must bear these losses. They have our deepest compassion. I extend my heartfelt sympathies to the families of the loved ones of those who have died and those who bear the wounds of combat. We are fortunate as a Nation to have dedicated citizens who willingly volunteer to make such great sacrifices to defend this Nation's liberty.

Just weeks ago, together with the distinguished Senator from Alaska and the distinguished Senator from South Carolina, I went to Iraq and Afghani-

stan and again looked into the faces of those brave young men and women and thanked them on behalf of the people of this Nation.

In just 3 months—91 days to be exact—the sovereignty that has been held in trust by the Coalition Provisional Authority since Iraq was liberated on April 9, 2003, will be returned to the Iraqi people. This will represent an important milestone on Iraq's path to freedom and democracy, but it is a path fraught with continuing dangers.

The recently adopted "Transitional Administrative Law" states that "the work of the [Iraq] Governing Council shall come to an end" upon the assumption of sovereignty by an Iraqi Interim Government on June 30, 2004. The TAL further states that this Iraqi Interim Government "shall be constituted in accordance with a process of extensive deliberations and consultations with cross-sections of the Iraqi people conducted by the Governing Council and the Coalition Provisional Authority and possibly in consultation with the United Nations."

Yesterday, the Armed Services Committee, which I am privileged to chair, received testimony from several Department of Defense officials regarding on-going military operations and activities in Iraq, and preparations for this transition to sovereignty. While some concerns about details of the transition remain, I was greatly encouraged by the testimony the Committee received. A coordinated process of deliberation and consultation with the Iraqi people is underway by the Coalition Provisional Authority, the Iraqi Governing Council, and representatives of the United Nations to define and select an Iraqi Interim Government.

Much remains to be done in this process, but it is a process that must not be delayed. The moment has arrived for the coalition to move from occupying power to partner. The moment has arrived for the Iraqi people to assume responsibility for their destiny.

The path to full freedom and democracy in Iraq will not be without difficulty and missteps. That is to be expected, but we must not be afraid to continue that journey. Symbolically, much will change on June 30. Iraq, after 30 plus years of isolation, will rejoin the community of nations and resume responsibility for its actions and relations with other nations. In terms of the reconstruction and security efforts initiated by the Coalition Provisional Authority and coalition forces, little will change on July 1. Ongoing training of Iraqi Security Forces, assistance in restoring security, revitalization of essential infrastructure, and institutionalization of democratic processes will continue.

Two weeks ago, I traveled to Iraq, together with Senator STEVENS and Senator HOLLINGS. I was impressed by the progress that has been made since I last visited that nation in July. The challenges ahead are daunting, but the

spirit of our men and women in uniform, and that of the Iraqi people, was reassuring and inspiring.

While the progress made in Iraq is substantial, it must be viewed in the context of the entire Middle East. Iraq can serve as an example and a beacon of hope, but much more complex issues must be addressed.

During my recent trip to the region for consultation with both U.S. and foreign leaders, there was a consistent expression of concern about the continuing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. The lack of progress toward a peaceful resolution continues to fan the flames of discontent across the entire region. The continuing violence breeds more violence that will undermine positive developments anywhere else in the region. We must redouble our efforts to find common ground on this difficult issue, if we are ever to achieve a peaceful world and triumph over terror and violence.

There are more challenges ahead, and there will be disappointments. That is clear. It is equally clear that President Bush and his national security team are up to the challenge. President Bush has provided steady, strong leadership in troubled times and will lead us to a safer, more secure future.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, how much time remains?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Six minutes 40 seconds.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask Senator ALLARD if I could proceed for 3 minutes and then he could finish the balance of the time.

Mr. ALLARD. That would be fine.

Mr. LOTT. I ask unanimous consent that that be so.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE 9/11 COMMISSION

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I stood in this general area a couple years ago and spoke out against the need for the 9/11 Commission. I am not generally an advocate of commissions. I think it is an abdication of our responsibility when we do it repeatedly. As a matter of fact, we in the Senate should do the job of investigating what happened or what didn't happen that perhaps should have been leading up to the events of 9/11 and in the aftermath, as we went into Iraq. That is why we have the Armed Services Committee. That is what Senator WARNER, the chairman, is working on. That is why we have the Intelligence Committee. I serve on that committee. We work assiduously to take a good look at the intelligence, to see where the problems have been and see what the solutions are.

Having said that, I think this Commission has shown a great deal of calm and maturity. The leadership of the two senior members, former Governor

Kean and former Congressman Hamilton, has been thoughtful. Members on both sides of the Commission have asked good and tough questions. I may regret saying this when their final report comes out, but I think they have been doing a good job. It is not an easy job because you are trying to deal with hundreds of witnesses and thousands of pages of evidence.

That leads me to the real point. I have had occasion to watch a number of national security advisers to Presidents over my 32 years in Congress, seven different Presidents and their national security advisers. There have been some good ones of both parties but none better than Condoleezza Rice. This is an outstanding individual with a brilliant mind, tremendous insight into what is going on in the world. I could give some anecdotes of why I believe that. For that reason, I am pleased she is going to come before the Commission. She is going to take every question on and give a thoughtful, complete, thorough, and convincing argument. She will do fine. I think it is unnecessary. Maybe this whole process of whether she would testify has been unnecessary.

From a public relations standpoint, yes, she should have gone from the very beginning. But there are some important separation-of-powers principles involved. Executive privilege is not insignificant. It is something that is woven in the very fabric of this country. We cannot have a process where slowly but surely, in President after President after President, executive privilege and separation of powers have been eroded.

I have watched it. Yes, former national security advisers have waived their executive privilege and gone before Congress. I thought it was a mistake, regardless of party. I have always spoken out against that. So I do think it is important we say this is not a precedent. It should not and cannot be a precedent, or you are not going to have men and women willing to give in confidence the best advice to the President or to give him the information he needs to hear without concern that some day some congressional person will have that person before them testifying.

This is not an insignificant matter. It is very significant. Under these extraordinary circumstances, we need to have everybody we can testify in full, not so we can blame somebody but so we can plan for the future and do a better job next time.

Condoleezza Rice will be the key to that effort.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Colorado.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I thank the Senators from Virginia and Mississippi for their comments. I want to talk a little bit about the economy.

First of all, I want to point out this President inherited a bad economy. When he inherited this bad economy, he could have taken the old solution to all of our problems: You increase taxes and spending and somehow the other things are going to be better.

He took a new approach. The new concept was you need to cut taxes. By cutting taxes, you are going to stimulate productivity and the economy is going to grow. So the President courageously stepped forward, got his tax package passed out of the House and the Senate. The major tax packages were in 2001 and 2003. We did some in other years. We did a little dribbling and working to reduce taxes. The fact is, by reducing taxes during a time when we had taxes at an all-time high, we have helped the economy.

There is a lot of talk on the floor about how bad the economy has been, but that reaches back into the bad economy this President inherited when he moved into the Presidency.

The President's tax package is now beginning to work. Look at the economic indicators put out by the Joint Economic Committee in February of 2004. We talk about the unemployment rate, and that is going down. Employment is going up. Wages are going up. We have a chart that shows real gross private domestic investment going up. Corporate profits are going up. We have another chart here that shows farm income is going up. We have sources of personal income. That is going up. Total output, income and spending, those are going up. Production and business activity is now going up. Common stocks, prices, and yields are all going up in response to the President's economic package.

I went on the Internet this morning to see what was being said there: Consumer spending strong, and business investment rebounding. It had a chart showing how those factors were coming together. That is this morning. Then we see another chart that shows jobless claims continuing to trend downward. It shows an increase in the jobless rate at the time the President inherited this economy, and now we see, as his tax package has had an opportunity to go into effect, the jobless rate is going down.

The President's package for stimulating our economy has worked. It would be a shame if we walked away from that and went back to the old solutions which were to increase spending and raise taxes. That is the wrong solution at the wrong time.

The right solution is what the President has talked about. We need to cut taxes and spending in order that this economy continues to prosper, as we have seen in the figures from the last several months.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.