

programs based on some vague hope that other countries might open their markets in the future.

When I spoke about the challenges facing our rural communities back in July, I said we had a moral obligation to do right by our family farmers and ranchers. That should be our standard whenever we make decisions on agricultural policy: Are we doing right by rural America?

The administration's proposal to cut farm support and safety-net programs fails that basic test. Like so many other decisions this administration has made, it puts the interests of large agribusinesses ahead of farmers and consumers, and it threatens the future health of our rural communities.

In short, the administration's proposal does wrong by rural America.

Last month, I wrote a letter to President Bush asking him to rescind his administration's offer to cut farm support programs. Much to my disappointment, the President's top trade negotiator, Ambassador Zoellick, responded by saying that my concerns were outside the "mainstream of American agriculture."

Well, I have some news: In South Dakota and across rural America, selling out farmers and ranchers for the benefit of big agribusiness is not part of the mainstream.

I am also not reassured by Ambassador Zoellick's claim that, somehow, the 20-percent cuts will not actually impact our support and safety net programs.

Ambassador Zoellick has already touted these cuts as "concessions" that brought other nations back to the table.

So, which is it, are they concessions or not? Who is being fooled, the other 146 nations or American farmers and ranchers?

The administration can't have it both ways. Either the concessions mean something and that is what brought the negotiators to the table, or the administration fooled all our trading partners. Neither is good policy.

My experience with this administration—an administration which opposed a robust farm bill—tells me that if there is a trade deal that is bad for agriculture but good for other segments of our economy, agriculture will lose out, whether that means a 20-percent cut, or even a 50-percent cut.

And at that point, States like South Dakota, and all of rural America, will be on the short end of the stick. That is simply unacceptable.

We can do better. We can return mainstream values to our agricultural policies, and we can do right by America's heartland. It is not too late to reverse the administration's misguided agricultural and rural policies. The WTO negotiators are going back to the negotiating table early next month. They can ensure that we do not give up important safety-net programs without getting anything in return.

Those of us who stand with America's farmers and ranchers will continue to

fight to ensure that they are once again treated with the dignity and respect that they not only deserve but are entitled to as the anchors of so many of our Nation's communities, and a vital part of our Nation's economy.

I yield the floor.

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE REFORM ACT OF 2004

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 2845, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2845) to reform the intelligence community and intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Collins Amendment No. 3705, to provide for homeland security grant coordination and simplification.

Lautenberg Amendment No. 3767, to specify that the National Intelligence Director shall serve for one or more terms of up to 5 years each.

Warner/Stevens Amendment No. 3781, to modify the requirements and authorities of the Joint Intelligence Community Council.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maine is recognized.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I note that the Senator from Massachusetts is in the Chamber. I wonder if I could inquire of the Senator from Massachusetts whether he is going to be seeking recognition to speak on the bill or on another issue?

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. The subject matter on which I will address the Senate is related to the substance of the bill, but it is not directly going to be on the bill itself. It is related to the substance of the bill.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I would like to propound a unanimous consent request that the Senator from Massachusetts be recognized for 10 minutes, to be followed by the Senator from Oregon, Mr. SMITH, to be recognized for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair points out that under the Pastore rule, it does take unanimous consent to speak on matters other than the bill for the first 2 hours.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I will be glad to debate that issue if the Chair is going to make a ruling on it. I maintain that the substance on which I am speaking is related to intelligence issues. If there is going to be a point of order made on substance under the Pastore rule, I would be glad to have the Chair rule and we will let the Senate vote on it.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is a unanimous consent request pending before the Senate. Is there objection? Is there objection to the request of the Senator from Maine for 10 minutes for the Senator from Massachusetts and 10 minutes for the Senator from Oregon?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

IRAQ—SHIFTING RATIONALE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, with tonight's Presidential debate coming up, the whole Nation will be watching JOHN KERRY and George Bush debate the all important issue of why America went to war in Iraq, when Iraq was not an imminent threat, had no nuclear weapons, no persuasive links to al-Qaida, no connection to the terrorist attacks of September 11th, and no stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction.

It is now clear that from the very moment President Bush took office, Iraq was his highest priority as unfinished business from the first Bush administration.

His agenda was clear: find a rationale to get rid of Saddam.

Then came 9/11. In the months that followed, the war in Afghanistan and the hunt for Osama bin Laden had obvious priority, because al-Qaida was clearly the greatest threat to our national security.

Despite all the clear and consistent warnings about al-Qaida, President Bush treated it as a distraction from his obsession with Saddam. By the summer of 2002, President Bush was restless for war with Iraq. The war in Afghanistan was no longer in the headlines or at the center of attention. Bin Laden was hard to find, the economy was in trouble, and so was the President's approval ratings in the polls.

Karl Rove had tipped his hand earlier by stating that the war on terrorism could bring political benefits as well. The President's undeniable goal was to convince the American people that war was necessary with Iraq—and necessary right away—because Saddam was a bigger threat.

That conclusion was not supported by the facts or the intelligence, but they could be retrofitted to support it. Senior administration officials kept suggesting the threat from Iraq was imminent.

At a roundtable discussion with European journalists last month, Secretary Rumsfeld insisted: "I never said imminent threat."

In fact, Secretary Rumsfeld had told the House Armed Services Committee on September 18, 2002, ". . . Some have argued that the nuclear threat from Iraq is not imminent—that Saddam is at least 5-7 years away from having nuclear weapons. I would not be so certain."

In May 2003, White spokesman Ari Fleischer was asked whether he went to war "because we said WMD were a direct and imminent threat to the United States." Fleischer responded, "Absolutely."

What else could National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice have been suggesting, other than an imminent threat—an extremely imminent