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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, who seeks and finds us, let Your light shine on us today. May its bright beams provide us with answers to our questions, assurances for our doubts, strength for our weakness, and vision for our duty.

Illuminate the path of our Senators with the clarity of Your wisdom, so that whatever they say or do will bring honor to You.

Make our lives shining lights of Your goodness that people will see our faithful labors and glorify Your name. Help us to live to bless others.

We pray in the Spirit of Him who is the light of the world. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 minutes, with the first half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee and the second half of the time under the control of the Republican leader or his designee.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning we will start with a 60-minute period for morning business. Following that time, at approximately 10:45 or so, we will return to the pending business, which is the Transportation-Treasury-HUD appropriations bill. We expect to have two votes in relation to the minimum wage issue today. I hope we can schedule those votes early.

We need to make substantial progress on the underlying bill today, and I hope we can get back to amendments pertaining to matters within the scope of the bill. The two managers have been on the floor since Monday, and I know they are prepared to bring this bill to a close as soon as possible. I would reiterate again that we will finish this bill this week, with votes on Friday if necessary.

In addition to the Transportation-Treasury appropriations bill, we continue to move forward with resolve to meet our overall governing responsibilities. Given the significant, unexpected expenditures for Katrina, the Senate will meet the challenge of making tough choices about spending priorities. Most of my days, and the days of my leadership colleagues, have been spent in helping pull people together, in making those tough choices which are focused on restraining Government spending.

That does start at home in this body. Thus, yesterday the Senate overwhelmingly voted to eliminate congressional pay raises. I believe that was an appropriate action. It shows we are serious as we look for savings throughout the Government, and it starts at home in this body.

Eight committees of the Senate are hard at work doing the exact same

thing, and that is prioritizing. I thank and commend the committees and their chairs and ranking members—the HELP Committee, the Banking Committee, the Environment and Public Works Committee—for their success yesterday in meeting those goals set out in the budget. I thank the chairmen and the committee members for their tremendous progress to date.

SADDAM HUSSEIN TRIAL

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today begins what is no less than the trial of the century, the trial of Saddam Hussein.

For the first time in recent history, a former leader will stand before his own people to be judged and tried for his crimes against humanity. For the first time, the Iraqi people will hear and watch the “Butcher of Baghdad” answer for 23 years of terror.

Saddam’s crimes are surpassed only by the Rwandan genocide, Pol Pot’s killing fields, and the tyrannies of Hitler, Mao, Stalin, and Kim Jong Il.

Egyptians, Kuwaitis, and Iranians were put to death simply because he decreed so. Saddam killed Kurds because of their ethnicity. And he killed Shiites because of their religion, Sunnis for their political views. Even babies and toddlers fell victim to the firing squad.

As Prime Minister al-Jafari said yesterday, there will be no tears for Saddam Hussein. But most surely, there will be tears for the hundreds of thousands of lives he crushed and destroyed with utter ruthlessness.

The trial of Saddam will reveal to the Iraqis and to the world the full extent of his brutality. And as the crimes are tallied and recorded, he will face the full judgment of the people and the uncompromising judgment of history.

I am confident justice will be served and that Saddam and his henchmen will be treated fairly and appropriately. And I am hopeful the process

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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will be an opportunity for the Iraqi people to experience some measure of catharsis and closure on a dark and terrible chapter in their history.

I commend them for their courage to restrain the desire for vengeance and to commit to the rule of law. It cannot be easy. Saddam's abuse ran deep and ran wide. But by granting him a fair trial—an opportunity to answer the charges—the Iraqi people are showing that Saddam's brutality was born of his nature and not theirs.

Cicero once said:

Let us remember that justice must be observed even to the lowest.

Today, let it be said that justice will be observed even by the once mighty.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Thank you, Mr. President.

IRAQ AND THE INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is testifying today at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. She will be meeting with the full Senate later for a classified briefing.

I am sure one of the topics that will be discussed at length will be the Iraqi constitutional referendum of this last Saturday. That vote was an important milestone. The voting by so many Iraqis was again a demonstrable act of courage. It is my most sincere hope that in the months to come, the political process in Iraq moves forward, that a stable government takes control in Iraq, and that Iraq takes control of its own future.

But similar to many of my colleagues, and a growing majority of Americans, we will not be satisfied with the status quo or the stay-the-course answers that we hear over and over from the White House when it comes to the situation in Iraq. The most fundamental questions we have to ask of this President and this administration are, What is your plan for victory? What is your plan for success? What is your plan to bring American troops home from Iraq?

It now seems evident that the constitution will pass. It also seems evident that despite substantial opposition from the Sunni minority, no province will reject this constitution or, if any do, there will not be enough to, in fact, reject the whole document.

Sunnis make up 20 percent of the population but 90 percent of the insurgency in Iraq. Sectarian violence is claiming the lives of thousands of Iraqis. We can't even calculate how many. Some are fearful that this country could still fall apart.

Saturday's election is no guarantee of long-term democracy in Iraq, but it

was an important step forward and one that I applaud. The government that may now emerge needs to build legitimacy in Iraq and with its neighbors. It needs to take back control of its country from insurgency, chaos, and lawlessness so that American troops can come home.

Iraq cannot succeed if the Sunnis—one in five of the Iraqis—feel disenfranchised and alienated. It is a challenge to their leaders to put together a government now that truly reflects their country, to build not just a coalition of tribes but a nation. This must happen because the cost of destroying and now replacing the governing regime in Iraq has been so costly.

Saturday was a good day in Iraq, for sure. But the elections last January 30 also represented a good day for Iraq, and 543 Americans have lost their lives in Iraq since that election last January. Mr. President, 15,063 American service men and women have been wounded in Iraq, and 1,979 Americans have been killed. We are closing in on that awesome figure of 2,000 of our best and bravest soldiers having given their lives in Iraq.

Iraq passed an important milestone Saturday with the constitutional referendum. The process was a refreshing demonstration of democracy at work in a region unaccustomed to such a display of civic participation. But the product, some have argued, is flawed. Nonetheless, Iraqis, with their vote, have taken a step in this political process forward. This opportunity for Iraq has come at a high cost for America.

As the number of Americans killed continues to grow, and the number of injured increases as well, do we have a clear plan in place? At what moment in time will the Iraqi Army battalions be prepared to step forward so that Americans can step back? At what point in time will the Iraqi police force, the Iraqi security forces, say, "We can now control our own country and now Americans can go home"?

This administration gives us the vaguest notion that it is somehow wrong to think about when that date may come. Perhaps it is wrong to announce it but not to have a plan to reach it. It is something that concerns me.

A few weeks ago, Generals Casey and Abizaid told a meeting in Congress that only one battalion was prepared to stand and fight by itself in Iraq today—only one battalion of the Iraqi Army. It is a far cry from 150,000-plus American soldiers who stand and fight today, who risk their lives today.

Today, the trial of Saddam Hussein is beginning. We were greeted this morning with all the major news organizations showing the closed-circuit videotape and film of the trial. It is a good thing that he is standing trial because he is a vicious murderer, a thug, and a monster of a human being.

However, Americans are questioning, still, whether or not we have paid too heavy a price for this day to have ar-

rived and asking of this administration, now that he is standing trial: How much longer will we be standing trial in Iraq as we wait for the outcome each day of the bloody fighting?

What has changed since May of 2003 is that the costs of the war have risen, are still climbing; the trust the American people have placed in the President has been shaken. What has also changed is, while the cost of war continues to grow, the alleged justifications for the war have multiplied, and the clarity of our purpose has diminished dramatically. This is a terrible and tragic combination.

Saddam was a monster. That is true. But we must never forget that of all the many reasons given to us by this administration to invade Iraq, the evil nature of Saddam was the only one that has proven true. Except for the brutality of Saddam Hussein—as bad as it was, as horrible as it was—all the other reasons for going to war the administration put forth turned out not to be accurate. There were no weapons of mass destruction. We still, many years later, have found no evidence of that claim, made over and over and over again at the highest levels of this administration.

The 9/11 Commission showed us there was no support for al-Qaida in Iraq. Yet as recently as last Sunday, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice tried to again link al-Qaida and 9/11 with Saddam Hussein.

The 9/11 Commission made it clear, there is no linkage. The war has not increased our own security. Some can argue—and I think convincingly—that it has made the world a more dangerous place. It has created a training ground for terrorism in Iraq where insurgents come from surrounding countries to train themselves in killing American soldiers, to go out and do even worse to Americans and others all around the world.

The only reason left for this war was the removal of Saddam Hussein. Two-thirds of Americans, when they measure that benefit against the enormous cost in blood and treasure, conclude it may not have been worth that price. Nearly \$200 billion has been spent, nearly 2,000 Americans have been killed, and the pricetag goes up every day in terms of American lives and American treasure.

Our national interest has suffered in other ways as well. The war has altered the international strategic environment to our disadvantage. Let's begin with Iran. Iran gives every sign that it is determined to acquire nuclear weapons. Such a development threatens regional stability and our own national security. It is not in our interest or the world's interest. In August, the Bush administration went to the diplomats of more than a dozen countries and presented an hour-long slide show on Iran's nuclear program. This PowerPoint briefing incorporated satellite imagery and other data to try to convince other nations that Iran's nuclear program is aimed at producing