

The United States stands shoulder to shoulder with the people of Jordan during this difficult time. We share their grief and their determination to bring the killers to justice.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 1 hour, with the first half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee and the second half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

The Senator from Idaho.

116TH BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM IN IRAQ

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, tomorrow and through the weekend, we will be celebrating Veterans Day. I thought it was appropriate that I come to the Chamber this morning for two purposes. First, as chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee in the Senate, I have had the distinct pleasure of working with the VA and working with veterans across this country over the last year to not only provide them the services they need to improve their lives but to recognize the changing scene of veterans health care and the new veterans that are being created out of the conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan and the kind of care and service those brave young men and women will need as they return home, some of them certainly not as physically or mentally whole as we would like.

Because of their tremendous service to our country in the war on terrorism, I can say very proudly that this Congress and our committee and the Veterans' Administration have clearly stepped up to do what is right and appropriate in the recognition of the time-honored care we have provided for our veterans down through the decades and down through the conflicts in which America found itself, in the preservation of our freedom and the advancement of all peoples around the world.

Idaho played a unique role this year, and I am here today to talk about the Idaho National Guard 116th Brigade Combat Team that is now returning from service in Iraq. For the last 18 months, these brave men and women have made a tremendous sacrifice to be away from their families and friends to defend our Nation and work to build a stable and free Iraq. For that, I am extremely grateful to all of them.

It is important to remember that the soldiers of the National Guard are ci-

vilians first and soldiers second. They are our doctors and our business men and women, plumbers, farmers, teachers. Yet they have all answered their country's call to action during this time of need. The skills these civilian soldiers bring to the table have proven to be invaluable as our soldiers work side by side with the Iraqi people to restore the critical infrastructure, establish a thriving economy, and promote a free and prosperous system of government.

Earlier this year, I had the privilege, once again, to visit Iraq—it was my second time while we have been engaged there in the war on terrorism—fulfilling a promise I had made to the 116th as I and the delegation and the Governor saw them off now over a year ago. So I was extremely proud to be there and to see this phenomenally enthusiastic civilian soldier in his or her work area as they did what they do so very well in a very courageous and skillful manner.

These civilian skills not only were essential to provide the security for the Iraqi people, but they also provided the essential ongoing construction efforts. I was humbled to have that opportunity to meet with these fine young men and women on the battlefield in Iraq and to express the gratitude of the people of the State of Idaho and our Nation for these efforts.

I also have enormous respect for what they did, but what is phenomenal is the feedback we received from the Iraqi Government officials regarding the work of the 116th. As I say, these are unique soldiers. The Iraqi people saw that and understood that these were really civilians who had tremendous talents in civilian life, and they incorporated that not only in the protection and the soldiering that went on over there but in the rebuilding of the infrastructure about which I talked. These soldiers faced a very difficult and dangerous task of maintaining the peace and stability in some very hostile environments. Yet they continued their mission, and they handled it with tremendous honor.

The members of the 116th have spent 12 months in Kirkuk and other areas within that region. Their mission was to provide for the security of the people of Iraq against insurgents and terrorist attacks, establishment of self-reliant government institutions, and the reconstruction of the basic and critical infrastructure. Their two overriding missions were overseeing the successful national elections in January and the national referendum vote on October 15. Both of these missions were tremendously successful. We know about that. This is exactly what our President had proposed and laid out before us.

While Americans and Members of Congress are tremendously anxious about the war currently going on in Iraq, the reality is we are on schedule and on course to do exactly what we set out to do to help the citizens of Iraq in standing up for government,

providing a representative form of government, and stabilizing that area of the world. The 116th from Idaho, these tremendous civilian soldiers, participated in that, and I must tell you that in representing the largest deployment from the State of Idaho that has ever happened to our National Guard, we stand as Idahoans today tremendously proud of the work they did.

The good news is, they are coming home, and most of them will be home for Thanksgiving. We will be glad to see them back with their families and back in their communities and re-assuming their civilian lives and doing that not only for the Idaho National Guard but for all guardsmen and reservists around the country. As chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, working with the Secretary of the VA, holding hearings in Idaho and other places around the country, we want to make sure that this transition back into civilian life is as seamless as possible.

These are men and women who have been at war. To simply step out of a war zone and step into their community is not going to be an easy task. Yet that is exactly what a civilian citizen soldier does. Whether it is the Idaho 116th or whether it is the tens of thousands of other guardsmen, women, and reservists around the country, we owe them a phenomenal debt of gratitude for the work they have done.

You see, we have a system within our military that it is not just the active soldier who serves so well, but it is that citizen soldier, our friends and neighbors in our communities across the country, such as the 116th of Idaho, who continue to serve and, in a time of war, serve with honor and dignity.

As we celebrate Veterans Day tomorrow and this weekend, recognizing those who have stood in harm's way and in many instances have given their lives so our lives could be freer, let's remember those currently serving in Iraq, be it the active soldier or be it the Guard or Reserve, for they are all one and their missions are all the same. The 116th of Idaho Brigade Combat Team has made Idaho extremely proud.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alabama.

THE WAR IN IRAQ

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I want to express my appreciation for Senator CRAIG's comments. I think they are so appropriate as we approach Veterans Day tomorrow, November 11. As he said, it is important that we give gratitude to these soldiers. But it is also very important—maybe even more important—that this Senate and this Congress give our support to them, we back them up, we affirm them in the courageous service they are giving and not undermine what they are doing by thoughtless and unfair criticisms. That is what is on my heart today and I