

for Preparedness, may require.

“(h) REPORTS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of the Port Security Improvement Act of 2006, the Secretary, acting through the Commandant of the Coast Guard, shall submit a report to Congress, in a secure format, describing the methodology used to allocate port security grant funds on the basis of risk.”

CONSTITUTION DAY AND DEMOCRATIC OBSTRUCTION

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, yesterday, September 17, marked the 219th anniversary of one of the most significant events in U.S. history. On September 17, 1787, 219 years ago, 39 brave men signed the U.S. Constitution.

We are all familiar with the Preamble of the Constitution:

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Today across the nation, children in each and every classroom are celebrating the birthday of our Constitution. Very likely, they are reciting this very same Preamble. Many are, no doubt, struggling through this seemingly archaic syntax to come to distill its purpose. These children are asking themselves the same questions we in the Senate face each day on the Senate floor: What does it mean to establish justice? What does it mean to ensure domestic tranquility; to provide for the common defense; to promote the general welfare; to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity?

In the midst of debate, it is temptingly easy to mire ourselves in the intricacies of legislation, and we spend hours in committees negotiating a phrase or a single word. But let's not forget the purpose behind our debates. Mr. President, 219 years ago, 39 men fulfilled the promise, fulfilled the vision of the Declaration of Independence by signing the Constitution. Today, the legacy depends on us. As citizens and as Senators, it is our duty to ensure that the values and purposes embodied by the Constitution continue to be the values that define our daily life.

Over the past few months, we have had many opportunities to do just that: the PATRIOT Act, Defense appropriations, border security, the Voting Rights Act, the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act, pension reform, and just last week, port security.

But too often my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have inhibited the fulfillment of our duty. They have relied on obstruction and thrown up roadblocks at every opportunity. They have let politics get in the way of sound policy and purpose. That is unacceptable.

We have only a few days left in this session. This week, we will vote on the nomination of Alice Fisher to be an Assistant Attorney General for the Crimi-

nal Division at the Department of Justice. But it has taken months and months to get to this point—months and months of obstruction. We have other key national security nominees who need to be confirmed. These are positions vital to our continued safety and security, but at every turn we find obstruction instead of confirmation.

As we move forward, I urge my colleagues to review our Constitution's Preamble, to consider anew our purpose here in the Senate, and to let that purpose guide our debate and action here on the Senate floor.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S MISTAKES IN THE IRAQ WAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, for more than 3 years, this Congress, which has been given the name of the “do-nothing Congress,” has turned a blind eye to the intractable war in Iraq, ignoring the administration's many mistakes and allowing it to stay on a failed course.

Here we are, with 6 days left in the 109th Congress, and the Republicans, who control the House and Senate and the White House, have not held one hearing—not one—into the President's wartime failures. During the Civil War, President Lincoln was faced continually with oversight hearings by his Congress. Of course, we know during World War II, there were a number of commissions. The most famous was that conducted by Senator Harry Truman of Missouri, which led to his becoming Vice President. Some say, but for that he would not have been chosen as Vice President. What was the Truman Commission? It was to determine what was going on with World War II. Was money being wasted? Were troop levels right? Korean war hearings were also held, and the same for the Vietnam war. But for this war, none—even though this war has taken longer than it took to settle the differences in the European theater in World War II. Soon it will be the same amount of time that we were able to beat Japan.

This Republican Congress has wasted 20 months on horse slaughtering; the Schiavo case, dealing with someone's personal relationship, which should not even have been before this body; gay marriage; the nuclear option; flag burning; repealing the estate tax. But they could not find a day for some time to look at the President's mistakes, missteps, and misconduct, which have hurt American security and plunged Iraq into a civil war—not a day.

Yesterday's Washington Post newspaper brought the latest indictment of the Bush incompetence in Iraq, in a front-page story entitled “Ties to GOP Trumped Know-How Among Staff Sent

to Rebuild Iraq.” Mr. President, this article says a lot of things, but here is some of it:

... applicants didn't need to be experts in the Middle East or in post-conflict reconstruction. What seemed most important was loyalty to the Bush administration.

It is interesting to note that the person selected to do this is a man by the name of O'Beirne. I saw that name and it flashed because I have been on programs with a woman by the name of Kate O'Beirne. And I'll be darned, it happened to be her husband who was chosen to find the people to take care of postwar Iraq.

Here are some of the questions that were asked of the applicants: “Did you vote for George W. Bush in 2000?” They even asked questions about how the applicant felt about *Roe v. Wade*. People being interviewed for purposes of helping rebuild war-damaged Iraq were asked questions on *Roe v. Wade*. The questions had nothing to do with one's competence, their educational background, or their experience. The article says that

... from April 2003 to June 2004 [it was clear that O'Beirne] lacked vital skills and experience

to do what he was required to do. It says:

A 24-year-old who had never worked in finance—but had applied for a White House job—was sent to reopen Baghdad's stock exchange. The daughter of a prominent neoconservative commentator and a recent graduate from an evangelical university for home-schooled children were tapped to manage Iraq's \$13 billion budget, even though they didn't have a background in accounting.

The article also says:

Interviews with scores of former CPA personnel over the past two years depict an organization that was dominated—and ultimately hobbled—by administration ideologues.

“We didn't tap—and it should have started from the White House on down—just didn't tap the right people to do this job,” said Frederick Smith, who served as deputy director of the DPA's Washington office. “It was a tough, tough job. Instead we got people who went out there because of their political leanings.”

But many CPA staff members were more interested in other things: in instituting a flat tax—

People were sent there with no background, no education, no academic experience, and set out to create a flat tax in Iraq.

They were interested “in selling off government assets, in ending food rations and otherwise fashioning a new nation that looked a lot like the United States. Many of them spent their days cloistered in the Green Zone, a walled-off enclave in central Baghdad with towering palms, posh villas, well-stocked bars and resort-size swimming pools.”

Mr. President, this picture says it all. Here is Paul Bremmer. They dumped General Garner after a few weeks and brought Bremmer in. Here he is, on his throne—on his throne. He is on a throne surrounded by Iraqis.