

Following immigration, we will turn our attention to the 3 remaining bills from the original 10: an energy bill that will take crucial steps toward weaning our country of our addiction to foreign oil; we are going to reauthorize the Higher Education Act which will address skyrocketing costs of college; and a Defense authorization bill to make critical investments to address troop readiness problems in the military, and that debate will be led by the Presiding Officer.

Readiness will be led by the distinguished junior Senator from Virginia, someone who has experience in battle and more than just words. We look forward to following the distinguished Senator from Virginia in making sure our troops are ready, their rotations are right, they are trained right, and that they are not going back, as happened in Nevada 2 weeks ago when someone was going back for a fourth tour of duty and acknowledged to his family he was tired and knew he wouldn't come back. He had survived too many explosions to go back for another tour of duty and survive another explosion, and he was right. He is now dead.

We will also reconfigure our national security strategy to better meet the threats and challenges we face today that the President, we believe, is overlooking.

We have made great progress this year, especially when we have put our partisan differences aside to work toward common goals. But for all the good that has come in the shadow of President Bush's catastrophic Iraq war, we need to do so much more. Ending the war will continue to be our No. 1 priority every single day as the year continues.

The month of May 2007 was the third deadliest month in the war. It was close to being the deadliest, but they didn't break that record, thank goodness. But May was the third deadliest month in the entire 51 months of this war. June is off to a horrifying start. Sixteen Americans have been killed in the first 3 days of the month.

The President's troop escalation is now complete. Yet a New York Times article this morning reports that security goals are far, far, far short of the military's hopes, with just about one-third of Baghdad's neighborhoods in some semblance of order.

In the midst of this growing chaos, the Senate Intelligence Committee released a new bipartisan report just before the Memorial Day deadline. My good friend and colleague, Chairman JAY ROCKEFELLER, working with the vice chair of the committee, KIT BOND—and the Intelligence Committee has become a nonpartisan committee, as it was set up to do—they worked on a bipartisan basis, and the information they came up with is long overdue. Previously, there was not cooperation between the majority and the minority. The chairman of the committee basically stonewalled everything the

committee was trying to get done, and that is the reason we shut the Senate down. But that information has now come forward, and my colleague, Senator ROCKEFELLER, deserves enormous credit for putting together this crucially important report.

It further brings to light the administration's decision to go to war in Iraq regardless of the facts and warnings issued by the Intelligence Committee. The Intelligence Committee foretold much of the chaos we now face. They told the President, among other things, the following: that installing democracy would be a long, difficult, and probably turbulent challenge in Iraq, and that was an understatement; No. 2, that al-Qaida would try to take advantage of U.S. attention on postwar Iraq to reestablish its presence in Afghanistan, and they have done that; that Iraq was a deeply divided society that likely would engage in violent conflict unless an occupying power prevented it, and we have not prevented it; that the U.S. occupation of Iraq would result in a surge of political Islam and increased funding for terrorist groups, and that has proven to be true; that Iraq's neighbors would jockey for influence in Iraq, including fomenting strife among Iraq's sectarian groups, and that is true; that some elements in the Iranian Government could decide to try to counter aggressively the U.S. presence in Iraq or challenge U.S. goals, and they have done that; and, finally, that our action in Iraq would not cause other regional states to abandon their WMD programs or their desire to develop such programs, and that also has proven to be true.

Clearly, the intelligence community got it right, and their warnings were not issued in a vacuum. Perhaps the most striking finding of the report is that all the key administration players were made aware of these warnings—Doug Feith, Paul Wolfowitz, Steve Hadley, Scooter Libby, all key Bush officials at the National Security Council, the State Department, the Department of Defense, and the Vice President were all on the distribution list.

The Bush administration cannot hide behind ignorance. Whether out of hubris or incompetence, the President and his men willfully ignored the experts and sent our troops to battle unprepared for the consequences.

Some might say, what is past is past. If the President's prewar failure was a one-time event, we could maybe forget about it, even though that would be hard. But if President Bush's prewar failure was a one-time event, we could leave it to the historians to study and judge the tragedy of his incompetence. But even today, after almost 3,500 American deaths and more than 20,000 wounded, the President continues to cherry-pick facts in order to paint a rosy but very misleading picture of Iraq.

After tens of thousands of injuries to our troops, the President continues to ignore the advice of experts. After

nearly \$500 billion of America's treasure has been spent in Iraq—some say it is approaching \$1 trillion, but a vast amount of our treasury—he is still dreaming his way through this epic tragedy. The country's eyes are wide open, and it is time for the President to wake up.

I understand some Americans are frustrated that we here in Congress have not been able to move more quickly to end the war. Many who voted for change in November anticipated dramatic and immediate results in January. They did get some dramatic changes. This is what we have given them: more than 75 hearings on Iraq, the Walter Reed scandal brought to light and steps taken to make it right, a supplemental bill sent to the President that set a firm policy to responsibly end the war—only a small step but a step, a second supplemental that set benchmarks and voided the President's blank check—the first was vetoed, this was not.

Our resolve has never been stronger. With a razor-thin majority—and, remember, it is a razor-thin majority—an obstinate President, and a Republican minority that continues to bow to his will, we are nonetheless making real progress. However, under the Senate's rules and our Constitution, there is only so far a determined majority can go, especially with our 49-50 disadvantage, which is due to Senator JOHNSON's illness. We can only end this war if the President changes course, or more Republicans join with us to force him to do so.

When we take up the Defense authorization bill, we will not just work to correct the President's neglect of troop readiness and protection, we will give our Republican colleagues another opportunity to join us and bring a responsible end to this war. We will fight for that every day this year, as long as the President and a few allies left here in Congress continue to defy the reality the rest of us see clearly.

We owe it to the men and women serving overseas and serving at home, to families who await the return of those overseas, and all Americans who want the Iraq tragedy to finally end.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.