

program in question was legal. It only grants the telecommunications carriers immunity if the Attorney General certifies those carriers cooperated with intelligence activities designed to detect or prevent a terrorist attack and that such a request was made in writing and with the assertion that the program was authorized by the President and determined to be lawful.

Finally, this bill provides the fairest course of action for addressing corporations that, when presented with an urgent official request at a critical period for our Nation's security, acted in a patriotic manner and provided assistance in defending this Nation. These companies were assured that their cooperation was not only legal but necessary and essential because of their unique technical capabilities. Also note that the President initially authorized the NSA program in the early days and weeks after the September 11 attacks, attacks that shocked our Nation and forced us to quickly react and adjust to the new reality of the 21st century, where terrorism was occurring in our own backyard. If a telecommunications company was approached by Government officials asking for assistance in warding off another terrorist attack and those Government officials produced a document stating the President had authorized that specific activity and that activity was regarded as legal, could we say the company acted unreasonably in complying with this request?

In the interest of protecting our Nation in this new environment of the 21st century and bringing stability and certainty to the men and women who are in our intelligence community as they carry out their very vital and critical missions in defending and preserving our freedoms at home, I urge passage of FISA reform that is bipartisan, that respects an active balance among all branches of Government, that will establish a key role for the courts going forward in evaluating surveillance measures in the United States and against U.S. persons abroad and that we will allow the intelligence community to devote its full efforts to fighting and winning the war on terror.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PRYOR). The Senator from Oklahoma.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, there is confusion as to the order of the speakers. I ask unanimous consent that the junior Senator from Pennsylvania, Mr. CASEY, be recognized for up to 15 minutes, in morning business, to be followed by me, to be recognized for up to 35 minutes in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CASEY. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. CASEY. Will the Senator modify his request to add Senator WEBB to

that lineup to be the next Democratic speaker?

Mr. INHOFE. May I ask how long Mr. WEBB, the junior Senator from Virginia, wishes to speak?

Mr. CASEY. Ten minutes.

Mr. INHOFE. I amend my request that it be, first, Senator CASEY for 15 minutes, Senator WEBB for 10 minutes, and myself for 35 minutes in morning business.

This is the new request: I ask unanimous consent that the junior Senator from Pennsylvania, Mr. CASEY, be recognized for up to 15 minutes, after which I will be recognized for up to 35 minutes, and then the Senator from Virginia, Mr. WEBB, will be recognized for up to 10 minutes in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized for up to 15 minutes.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Oklahoma for working through that unanimous consent agreement.

IRAQ

Mr. CASEY. I rise today to speak about the war in Iraq. There is a lot of talk in this Chamber and across this town and across the country about our economy, and that is justifiable. But we have to remember that in the midst of a difficult economy in America, there is a lot to talk about and to work on to respond to that. We still have a war in Iraq to worry about, to debate, and to take action on. I don't think we can lose sight of a war that grinds on without end in Iraq.

This war does burden our troops, obviously, with repeated and prolonged deployments and, in fact, drains our national resources. The war hampers our efforts in places such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, the real frontlines in the global struggle against Islamic terrorism and extremism.

So we must ask ourselves at least a couple of questions when it comes to the war in Iraq. There are many, but there are at least a few I can think of.

What are we in the Congress doing about this war today, this week, this month, and in the months ahead, even as we struggle to deal with a difficult economy?

The second question might be: When will the Iraqi Government start serious discussions on national reconciliation?

Third, how will we know when we have achieved our objectives in Iraq? How will we know that?

Finally, and I think the most compelling question is: When will our troops come home?

Last night, the President spoke about a number of topics, and one was the economy. One of the first words the President said with regard to the economy, he talked about a time of uncertainty. Mr. President—President Bush I mean—I disagree. With regard to the economy, this is not about something

that is uncertain. It is very certain. The lives of Americans, the perilous and traumatic economy they are living through is not uncertain or vague or foggy. It is very certain. The cost of everything in the life of a family is going through the roof, and we have to make sure we respond to that situation.

I argue that word "uncertainty" does apply when it comes to the war in Iraq in terms of our policy. I would argue to the President what is uncertain, if there is uncertainty out there in our land, it is about the war in Iraq. Uncertainty, frankly, about what our plan is in Iraq and what is this administration and this Congress doing to deal with this war in Iraq. That is where the uncertainty is. I think the reality of the economy is very certain for American families.

While the headlines about Iraq have all but vanished from the front pages and television screens and the administration continues to divert attention elsewhere, we have a fundamental obligation as elected representatives of the American people to continue to focus on the war until we change the policy and bring our troops home.

We marked the first year anniversary of the President's decision to initiate a troop escalation in Iraq, and we are coming upon the fifth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq.

Last night, in his State of the Union Address, the President described the surge in very positive terms. Make no mistake about it—we all know this—our soldiers have succeeded in their mission with bravery and heroism and violence in many parts of Iraq is, in fact, down. Yet despite all that, despite all that effort, despite all that work, Iraq today is still not a secure nation, and it will not be secure until its leaders can leave the Green Zone without fear of assassination. It will not be secure until they can leave the Green Zone without fear of suicide bombings. It will not be secure until its own national Army and police forces can stand up and protect all of Iraq's people without regard to ethnicity or creed.

In assessing whether the surge has worked, we should pay attention to the President's words from a year ago. President Bush declared in January 2007, when he first announced the surge:

Iraqis will gain confidence in their leaders and the government will have the breathing space it needs to make progress in other critical areas.

Those are the President's words. So let's judge this issue by his words. Judged by those standards enunciated by the President, we can only conclude the surge has not worked, if that is what the objective was. I add to that, when I was in Iraq in August and I talked with Ambassador Crocker about the terminology used by this administration with regard to the war, because I said sometimes the terminology is way off and misleading, he said: The way I judge what is happening here is