

will walk out with a sense of satisfaction we did our best. It may well be we will go on next week. Time will tell, subject to this vote tomorrow. As we say in the Navy: Well done, sir.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF STANLEY A. MCCHRYSAL TO BE LIEUTENANT GENERAL

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 599; that the nomination be confirmed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, no other motions in order, that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate resume legislative session.

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

The nomination considered and confirmed is as follows:

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Lt. Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal

Mr. WARNER. I thank the distinguished Presiding Officer, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. This nomination is for General McChrystal. General McChrystal is well-known to many of us in the Senate. I recall very vividly the period when our Nation was building its force structure to go into the situation in Iraq. And putting aside all of the honest debate on that decision to go in, I think the professional soldiers like McChrystal did their job.

McChrystal used to come every morning that the Senate was in session, at 8 o'clock, and brief Senators in S. 407. I know the Presiding Officer was there on a number of occasions. He was accompanied by COL Bill Caniano, who is currently on my staff, and they answered the questions, kept the Senate informed as to the buildup of that operation as our forces built up tempo and moved into the Iraq situation. A very fine officer.

He has been in Iraq now—well, I don't think you add up the number of tours because he has basically been there almost constantly over 2½ years; one of the longest serving members, whether it is a general officer or a private, in the Iraq theater. He has distinguished himself particularly on his initiatives to take on al-Qaida at any place, at any time of day or night, and to do the very best to eliminate that threat to not only the U.S. forces, Iraqi forces, but the Iraqi people who were brutally treated by that organization. And to the extent that we have reduced that situation of al-Qaida's capabilities in Iraq today, and also Afghanistan—this officer goes back and forth between

those two theaters—then it is, I would say, with a sense of humility he would say: I think I have done my best.

I am very pleased the President recognized his outstanding career, that he has been nominated now to become the chief of staff for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in operating that very essential part of the defense complex in the Department of Defense.

I thank the Senators, I thank the leadership, the Democratic leadership, particularly Senator DURBIN, who worked on it, and Senator LEVIN; and on this side, the Senator from Alabama, Mr. SESSIONS, and others who worked with me on this nomination during the course of last night's deliberations on a variety of matters on the Senate floor.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now return to legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we now proceed to a period of morning business in which Senators may speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

IOWA TORNADO

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I probably will not be more than 10 minutes, but I appreciate the will of the Senate if I need a few more minutes.

Today, I pay tribute to the victims of the devastating tornado that ripped through northeast Iowa a week ago Sunday. This would have been Memorial Day weekend. That is a weekend that traditionally offers a thank-you to veterans who have given their lives. It is a time of backyard barbecues, and in the Midwest it is when swimming pools open for business. But late afternoon on May 25, 2008, Mother Nature unleashed a tragic beginning to a summer vacation. It was a kind of natural disaster that makes people realize the perils of pettiness and appreciate what really matters the most.

A history-making twister produced winds in excess of 200 miles per hour. It tore across Butler County—that is my home county—Black Hawk County, Delaware County, and Buchanan County. It paved a 43-mile path of destruction. The severe storm system virtually ripped the town of Parkersburg in half. It destroyed 22 businesses, leveled 222 homes, and damaged 408 others in a community of only 2,000. The storm system injured 70 individuals. The fatalities attributed to the tornado have now risen to eight Iowans.

But the statistics don't do justice to the heartbreak and to the hurt. Nat-

ural disasters have wrought havoc on humanity since the beginning of time. In recent years, the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia claimed more than 100,000 lives and displaced millions of victims from their homes. In September 2005, a category 5 hurricane ravaged the American gulf coast, causing \$11.3 billion in damages. Last year, in Greensburg, KS, a tornado leveled the entire community of 1,400, causing an estimated \$267 million in damage. The financial estimate of damage from the May 25 tornado in my home area from storms and flooding hasn't been calculated yet, but the pricetag will not do justice to the heartbreak and to the hurt.

Whether it is an earthquake, a hurricane, or a tornado, a natural disaster leaves behind massive debris and destruction. The physical and financial tolls shouldered by the victims arguably pale compared to the emotional scars and personal losses left in the aftermath of a killer natural disaster.

This tornado was what they call an F-5 tornado, the worst they get. It struck terror into the hearts and minds of northeast Iowans over Memorial Day weekend, and it also hit close to home as well. From the lawn on my farm near New Hartford, I watched what I thought was nothing but a dark storm cloud blackening the sky as the tornado made its way across Butler County from Parkersburg—population, as I said, about 2,000—to my hometown of New Hartford, population 600.

It was the first F-5 tornado to strike Iowa since 1976, so tornadoes like this don't happen every day in our State. Maybe they do in Oklahoma, but they do not every day in my State. And it happened to be the deadliest tornado in the State since the 1968 tornado in Charles City, IA. I believe that tornado claimed about 13 lives compared to the 8 so far here.

In some ways, the storm may serve as a wake-up call to those of us who have become somewhat complacent about severe weather warnings. The day after the storm, I visited with residents of Parkersburg and New Hartford and toured the damage, along with Senator HARKIN and Governor Culver, and Congressman BRALEY was there. It was an unimaginable scene.

In Parkersburg, the tornado ripped apart the Aplington-Parkersburg High School. This is a picture of that devastating damage. It will cost \$14 million to rebuild. Thank God they were well insured, I have been told. I haven't heard that directly but indirectly.

It destroyed the Parkersburg City Hall, crushed the town's only gas station, and crumbled the grocery store. If you watched CNN yesterday, you were able to find some pictures from the cameras that guard the bank during the night and over the weekend, and you saw, before they went blank, sucking everything up. And you know where a lot of those bank papers landed, and a lot of pictures from various homes? In Prairie Du Chien, WI, 100