

SENATE—Friday, November 9, 2001

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BLANCHE L. LINCOLN, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, in the quiet of this magnificent moment of conversation with You, we dedicate this day. We want to live it to Your glory, alert to the dangers of this time but without anxiety, prepared but not perplexed. We praise You that it is Your desire to give Your presence and blessing to those who ask You. You give strength and power to Your people when we seek You above anything else. You guide the humble and teach them Your way. Help us to humble ourselves as we begin this day so that no self-serving agenda or self-aggrandizing attitude will block Your blessings to this Senate and to our Nation through us. Speak to us so that we may speak with both the tenor of Your truth and the tone of Your grace.

We say with the Psalmist:

God be merciful to us and bless us and cause Your face to shine upon us, that Your way may be known on Earth and Your salvation among the nations. You are our Lord and Saviour.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BLANCHE L. LINCOLN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 9, 2001.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of Rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BLANCHE L. LINCOLN, a Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. LINCOLN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Madam President, there will be no rollcall votes today, as was announced last evening by the majority leader. This morning the Senate will be in a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each. As under the direction of the majority leader, next week is going to be an extremely busy week. We are going to work on the economic stimulus package, and there are a number of other pieces of legislation we are going to do our very best to complete prior to Thanksgiving.

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 now be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Alaska.

ENERGY NEEDS AND COMMITMENTS

Mr. STEVENS. Madam President, I have applauded the actions of my colleague, Senator MURKOWSKI, as our senior Republican on the Energy Committee. Because of my involvement in other matters, particularly appropriations, it has not been possible for me to be here to join him as much as I would like to do so.

I consider the opening of the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge area for environmentally sound oil and gas development to be the issue of highest national security we will vote on this year. The President of the United States shares that view. I believe many in this body do.

Last week President Bush said: It is in "our national interest to get [an energy bill] to [his] desk." I am paraphrasing that. I believe the vast majority of Americans share the President's view. Just last night while speaking in Atlanta, President Bush called upon Congress to send an energy bill to his desk again "to reduce our dependence on foreign oil."

When the President said that, there was such a unanimous outpouring of

support from the people in the audience. It was probably the loudest reaction to his whole speech.

I believe that is correct. It is a national concept and there is national support for that goal. Today we still do not have a commitment to bring up and complete action on this energy bill. This morning I rise to again highlight some of the implications of failure to act now.

The stability of some of the nations principally responsible for supplying oil to the United States can no longer be taken for granted. In 1979, when the instability of the Middle East was of paramount concern, we took action to protect Israel. As our major ally in the Middle East, we should proceed with energy legislation not only to protect our own interests but to ensure that we can continue to support Israel as we have agreed to do.

In 1979, our Government entered into a bilateral agreement with Israel to ensure that Israel would have access to the oil it needs to meet its daily requirements. Everyone in the Senate should be familiar with that agreement. We understood then that some Middle Eastern countries had the power to hold Israel hostage by denying access to oil.

Let me read from a relevant portion of the agreement we signed with Israel to protect its supply of oil:

If the oil Israel needs to meet all its normal requirements for domestic consumption is unavailable for purchase . . . the United States Government will promptly make oil available for purchase by Israel to meet all of the aforementioned normal requirements of Israel.

Our Government renewed that agreement in 1994 to ensure that Israel is protected through 2004. When we finally take up the comprehensive energy bill, we should include an amendment to extend that agreement with our Middle Eastern ally, Israel.

The point is, Israel produces less than 500 barrels of oil per day. It consumes nearly 300,000 barrels of oil a day. Regardless of what happens in the Middle East, Israel needs guaranteed access to oil just to maintain its economy. And regardless of what happens in the Middle East, we have to be able to produce and provide to Israel at those 300,000 barrels of oil per day in accordance with that agreement.

My understanding is that Alaska's oil is the oil that would fulfill that agreement because it is the same quality of oil that Israel's refineries run and could be run in those refineries without change.

Given our current dependence on foreign oil, and 57 percent of our oil is imported, Middle Eastern supplies of oil