

Brett was assigned to Company C, 2nd Battalion of the 502nd Infantry of the 101st Airborne Division. He trained to be a sniper and served a year in Korea before being called to Iraq.

Brett's job in Iraq was to drive a 2½-ton diesel carrier. It was grueling and dangerous work. SGT Shane Harris described Brett as one of his most dependable drivers. He was able to log 20-hour days moving soldiers, loads of ammunition, thousands of gallons of fuel, and pallets of bottled water, MREs, and other supplies.

Brett was one of the first American soldiers to cross the line into Iraq. SGT John Ryan recalled how he sent Brett in to push a line forward to secure a bridge. He said that he chose Brett because he was certainly up for it:

He believed in what we were there for. He knew what needed to be done. He knew how to lead from the front. He was sniper-qualified. He was mission-responsible. He was good under stress. He had a good head on his shoulders. He could always analyze and develop a course of action quickly.

On that same mission, it was later learned that some of our trucks got lost in Iraq after crossing the line. Not surprisingly, it was Brett who found them and, yes, got them out.

On July 23, 2003, SGT Brett Christian was killed and seven others were wounded near Mosul, Iraq, when his convoy was ambushed by rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire. He was 27 years old.

Madam President, Brett Christian was buried on the hollowed ground of Arlington National Cemetery on August 7, 2003. At that service, MAJ Douglas Fenton called Brett an American hero. He received a Purple Heart and Bronze Star.

There is no question that Brett Thomas Christian was a good man, a good son, brother, grandson, friend, and soldier. He was kind. He was compassionate. As his mother said:

They say the eyes are the windows of the soul. His eyes swelled with emotion. They were bright and welcoming.

At a memorial service for Brett in Ohio, Pastor Rick Duncan movingly described the kind of man Brett Christian became. This is what he said:

He was resourceful. He was gracious, never malicious. He never showed any sort of prejudice about anyone. He was responsible, uplifting, and thoughtful. He was a man of action. He was a charmer.

Ultimately, Brett Christian was a true warrior. Brett Christian made a lot of choices in his life. He chose to look at the positive, not the negative. He chose to see the good things in life and in people, not the bad. He chose to face fear and adversity head on and fight against the evil in our world. According to Brett's grandmother Eileen, the last time he was home he explained to his younger brother, who had indicated an interest in joining the military, exactly why he joined the Army. He wanted his brother to understand that he believed in what he was doing, that he believed in helping people and serving our country.

Let me conclude with something Sloan said about his beloved brother:

Brett had the most potential of anyone in the family—anyone I know. He's a beautiful soul who could have changed so much of the world. He had the love and ability to change a lot of the world.

Madam President, Brett Christian did change the world. Brett Christian did make a difference.

Brett's family—his mother Tess; his brothers Derek and Sloan; his grandparents Thomas and Eileen—remain in my thoughts and my prayers.

Madam President, I yield the floor. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah is recognized.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. BENNETT. Madam President, one of the facts that those of us who live in the Washington area have grown accustomed to is that the world looks different through the eyes of the reporters for the Washington Post and the reporters for the Washington Times. My wife and I sometimes play the little game of opening both papers simultaneously and looking at the two headlines side by side. Usually, the Washington Times says things that sound good from the Republican point of view and the Washington Post says things that sound good from the Democratic point of view.

The interesting thing this morning is that both papers covered the same story, and both papers said basically the same thing.

I went into the cloakroom, and I gathered some other papers to see if the headlines were the same there as well. I have them here. Let's start with the Washington Times and the Washington Post.

The Washington Times says:

Growth Erupts in Summer Order. Consumers, Businesses, Go on a Spending Spree.

Out of the Washington Post—they treat that not quite as enthusiastically, but they say:

U.S. Economic Growth Surges. Output Rises at the Highest Rate Since 1984, but Jobs Still Decline.

So the Washington Post puts in a little bash there for the President that the Washington Times does not.

If we go to the Wall Street Journal, which some think of as a mouthpiece for the Republican National Committee, their headline is:

Higher Gear, Economy Turned in its Best Quarter in Nearly Two Decades. GDP Surged 7.2 Percent in Quarter on Broad Based Gains. Bush Team Trumpet Data.

To balance that from the Wall Street Journal, let's go to the newspaper some consider the house organ of the Democratic National Committee, the New York Times, and their headline is:

Economy Records Speediest Growth Since the Mid-80's. Is Good News Here for Good? Bush Hopes So. Third Quarter Data Surge in Spending Helped by Rebates May Not Persist.

Then I picked up USA Today, the screaming headline:

7.2 Percent GDP Growth, Fastest in 19 Years. Economists Credit Tax Relief and Shoppers.

For one day at least, everybody agrees that the No. 1 story is the tremendous performance turned in by the American economy in the third quarter, and the headlines trumpet the numbers, 7.2 percent GDP growth.

I would like to go behind the numbers. I would like to add a few numbers and do what I can to try to put this performance in perspective.

No. 1, we have to recognize what even the New York Times has recognized, which is this is an extraordinary accomplishment, and this is a sign of very good times.

I notice a quote from Howard Dean, who is running for President on the Democratic side, that indicates he is a little disappointed in this; he is a little unhappy that Americans are earning more money, that disposable income is up, that the economy is booming. Perhaps he was hoping he could ride into the White House on a wave of consumer dissatisfaction. If that is his hope, at least the third-quarter numbers say he has to find something else for which to hope.

But it is true that the numbers we have here are not sustainable long term, and that is not necessarily bad because what we are looking for is not a single quarter of extraordinary growth. What we are looking for is a sustained period of recovery. The signs are there that we are, indeed, in such a period. It is not just the 7.2 percent growth in GDP we need to pay attention to; it is some other numbers. Let me address some of those numbers.

They are in the newspaper stories, some of them buried a little further than I would do it if I were writing the story, but the first number that is of significance is the growth in business investment. Yes, as the headlines indicate, the tax relief and the shoppers are responsible for this, but the tax relief is, indeed, something of a one-time phenomenon. The mailing out of the checks for the child tax credit put more money in the hands of parents just before back-to-school shopping, and that showed up in the shopping figures.

Furthermore, the combination of the lowering of withholding rates along with the child tax credits causes people to go out and make some very significant purchases. New cars went up as a significant part of this performance in the third quarter, and you don't buy a new car every quarter. Undoubtedly, you will see some tapering off of some of these major purchases. So we can say that the fourth quarter will not be at the 7.2 percent level as far as GDP is concerned.

One of the newspapers says it will fall all the way down to 4 percent. Madam President, 4 percent on an annual basis is very robust and wonderful growth for an economy as mature as ours. If we could maintain a 4 percent average for the next 2 or 3 years, we

would all be very happy about that. So those who are saying the 7.2 won't last and we will fall all the way down to 4 percent should remember there was a time not far distant in our history when we would have been very happy with 3.5 percent. I will take 4 percent any day as a steady, stable growth in the economy.

Let's go back to the business investment number, the number that did not get as much attention as the 7.2 percent GDP number. Business investment grew at 11.1 percent, up from 7.3 percent the previous quarter. The thing to remember is that 7.3 percent is, in and of itself, considered a very strong indication of further growth, and this is the number that holds the promise of future jobs because if business is investing, business eventually is going to have to start hiring.

Let me put the 7.3 percent number in some perspective. As I say, in historic terms, 7.3 percent would be a good number, but we have seen business investment go down, not a positive number of any kind, a negative number for 9 out of the last 11 quarters. To have it come out of negative territory, be so strongly positive as to be at 7.4 percent, and then see the next quarter come in at 11.1, this is as strong a signal as we are going to get that the economy, which has been in recovery but struggling ever since the recession ended, is now in a period of takeoff for sustained growth for the coming year.

One of the other numbers the economists always look at is the question of inventories: How many goods do you have on the shelf, Mr. or Mrs. business person? How many goods do you have that are waiting to be sold? If the shelves are full, you are probably not going to be buying any more until they start to come down, until your inventories start to fall. Usually when you have a period of growth like we have experienced in the third quarter, your inventories go up because people are stocking their shelves as the sales are strong.

Inventories went down in the third quarter. The sales were so strong that they not only took everything we could produce but they reduced inventories that were already low even further, which means that for the fourth quarter and into the next year—first, second, and third quarters—businesses have a major challenge to restock those depleted inventories, which is another sign that there will be growth, another sign that there will be jobs, another sign that this recovery is well underway and has firm traction.

Take the three numbers and put them together: 7.2 percent increase in GDP, substantially more than anybody anticipated; 11.1 percent increase in business investment, substantially more than anybody had anticipated; and a reduction in inventory of .67 percent from the previous level, and you have the profile of a recovery that is very robust.

What caused this recovery? Certainly, one can say it was due. Cer-

tainly one can say this was part of the business cycle reasserting itself. We had the excesses of the 1990s that felt so wonderful while we were in them but that were so excessive that the reaction to them felt painful when it came.

It now appears we have worked through most of those excesses. We have paid the price for the bubble of the late 1990s and we are beginning to get back on solid footing. However, one must credit President Bush's initiative in pushing tax cuts at the right time and at the right level to accelerate this growth.

Virtually every one of these papers I have gone through at one place or another in the story will admit, triumphantly in the case of the Washington Times, grudgingly in the case of the New York Times, that the Bush tax cut made a significant contribution to this growth.

I have already recited how it works with respect to consumer spending, but the consumer spending could be a one-time phenomenon and not hold if it is indeed tied to the receipt of checks such as the child credit. However, if the consumer spending has been accelerated by virtue of the reduction in withholding rates, something President Bush insisted on over and over again and that had the greatest resistance in this Chamber, we can say that portion of the tax cuts will, in fact, have a permanent impact on the growth; that that is a gift that will, in fact, keep on giving and we will see continued consumer spending as people have more money left in their paychecks.

What is the outlook in terms of the other political number we hear over and over again in this Chamber, which is the deficit? One of the greatest arguments that was made as we were debating the Bush tax cut was it would make the deficit swell and soar beyond all comprehension and ultimately leave us bankrupt as a nation.

There is another interesting number, one that has not received this kind of headline throughout the country but that is very important. At one point, as the economists were making their projections with respect to the deficit, they said the deficit for this fiscal year, the year that ended September 30, 2003, would be as high as \$455 billion. That was a number that came out of the Office of Management and Budget at one point, as they made their guess as to what the economy would be doing and how much money would be available.

We have heard that \$455 billion figure repeatedly, particularly from those who were opposed to the President's tax cut and who have been opposed to the supplemental appropriation for Iraq. They are saying we have a \$455 billion deficit and we are going to try to add \$87 billion on top of it; that is irresponsible; we cannot possibly do that.

Well, an interesting thing happened on the way to the closing of the books. With a stronger economy and with

spending coming in at lower levels, we began to see higher revenues and, therefore, lower estimates. As the year got nearer to its close, some economists were saying the deficit might even be as low as \$400 billion instead of the \$455 billion; we might even be below the magic \$400 billion number. I do not know what is magic about the \$400 billion number, but it sounds good to pick that number.

Then we began to hear from the Congressional Budget Office: yes, the deficit will clearly be below \$400 billion. How much? It could be as much as \$20 billion below \$400 billion. It could be as low as \$380 billion.

The numbers are now in. The books have been tentatively closed, and it is \$374 billion. It is \$26 billion below the \$400 billion mark and it is \$81 billion below the \$455 billion that was being talked about just a few months ago.

It is purely a coincidence—there is no connection whatsoever—but it is interesting that the actual number below the highest amount that was forecast is almost identical to the \$87 billion of the Iraq supplemental. In other words, if we take the actual number of \$374 billion and add the \$87 billion, we come to the theoretical number close to the \$455 billion we were talking about.

All of us would love to sponsor legislation that could cut \$80 billion a year out of the deficit. We would stand before our constituents and take enormous credit. We would say, are we not wonderful? We have eliminated \$80 billion of the deficit.

The economy did it for us. I think we have to credit the combination of the Bush tax cuts with the growth of the economy in the business cycle, with making us a little bit humble, of telling the politicians we do not control the events nearly as much as we pretend to in our speeches.

The most important thing to remember is it is the economy itself that creates all Federal revenue. Money does not come from the budget. Money comes from the economy. Our job is to do whatever we can to get out of the way of intelligent market forces and allow the economy to grow as strongly as it can on its own. I think that is what Alan Greenspan has done at the Federal Reserve. I think that is what President Bush has led us to do in the Congress with the tax cuts, and I think the unanimous statements out of all of the papers today indicate it is working.

I send my congratulations to Chairman Greenspan, my congratulations to President Bush, and my best wishes for all of us that this will, in fact, continue.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CHAFEE). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I send a resolution to the desk and ask it be appropriately referred.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The resolution will be received and appropriately referred.

(The remarks of Mr. BIDEN pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 256 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE SENATE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I wanted to take this opportunity while we are in the quorum call to come to the floor and comment briefly on what we have done in the last several days and look ahead as to next week. We won't actually be closing here for a little bit as we are working on a couple of issues.

I want to thank everybody formally for the hard work they put forward this week. It was an aggressive week in terms of what we set out to accomplish, and we were able to finish everything we said we were going to do, with one exception, and that is set up to complete at the end of next week. People worked very late last night, with 14 rollcall votes, finishing close to midnight. I thank everybody for that commitment manifested over the last several days.

The days have been very long. Everybody's schedules are full with activities not just on the floor. There is this constant balancing act. We had to deal with three or four issues and bills at the same time. It seems to individual schedulers of Senators that things are somewhat discombobulated. Despite all that, we were able to finish a number of issues.

The Healthy Forests legislation was accelerated into the schedule because we had not planned exactly when we were going to do that. That took a lot of cooperation. We were able to take it to the floor and complete it, which is especially important with the recent fires that are and have been burning in California. As we have watched those images, we could not help but extend our prayers to the families, for the individuals who are so directly affected in that part of the country and also by fires in other States. With those images now that we see every morning, every night, and over the course of the day, we extend our heartfelt prayers to those affected.

On the Foreign Operations bill, our majority whip did a tremendous job in ushering that bill through. We had the bill on the floor. We came to a point

where we had certain challenges in terms of funding and paying for a particular very important amendment on HIV/AIDS, and the cooperation there on both sides of the aisle in being able to move off that bill for a period of time while that was resolved with the President pro tempore, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Senator TED STEVENS, coming forward and working out a proposal that allowed us to reach out and send a strong message across the world that this little virus, HIV/AIDS, is something we are going to beat over time; and then, with all that cooperation, coming back to the floor and passing that amendment, and ultimately the Foreign Operations bill last night, gives me a great deal of satisfaction because it shows cooperation, partnership, working together, and the attention to people's schedules on the floor, an efficient use of everyone's time.

I congratulate Senator MCCONNELL, the majority whip, who did a superb job in that regard.

The nomination of Michael Leavitt, now Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, was an issue we addressed, and it took a lot of work both behind the scenes and on the floor of the Senate. We were able to vitiate cloture and we were able to give him an up-or-down vote, which I would like to see more of in other nominations, and we will continue to fight for that. Michael Leavitt, now Administrator, got that up-or-down vote. That stresses the importance of having that sort of process of an up-or-down vote for all of the President's nominees.

In the Leavitt debate, there were disagreements on various policy issues, but we had a qualified nominee at the time. He deserved that vote and he got it, and I was pleased that he was confirmed by a large bipartisan vote.

The Iraq supplemental is coming to a close, and through the agreement last night, we will deliver on the President's request in terms of supporting our military women and men overseas and doing everything we possibly can from a legislative and financial standpoint to ensure their safety, but to maximize the safety of the Iraqi people and the reconstructive efforts promoted aggressively and entirely consistent with what Ambassador Bremer told us was necessary, our military leaders told us was necessary, our Commander in Chief told us was necessary.

There are a number of issues we debated in terms of how we monitor the spending of this money, which has been resolved, and whether it should be grants versus loans. There was a lot of good debate, and the issue was ultimately resolved right where the President said it would be most useful. We will complete that Monday. There will be no rollcall vote because both sides of the aisle have agreed to that, but we will talk further about the issue Monday. By Monday early evening or late afternoon, that bill will pass and that will bring that issue to a close.

We will spend a little time on the Interior conference report on Monday, and we will have a vote on that late Monday afternoon, somewhere between 5 and 6, probably 5:30 to 6 p.m.

We have the fair credit reporting bill on which we have agreement to bring to the floor, and that will probably be Tuesday.

Then we have the Internet tax moratorium which, as I said earlier this morning, I would have liked to have addressed today or last night, but because there are a number of Members who feel very strongly that we have to have a different time for debate, we all agree we will be doing that bill probably Thursday of next week. As I expressed this morning, my intention is to finish that either Thursday or Friday.

Last night, we did act on the continuing resolution, and that will fund our Governmental operations until November 7, and that will allow us to continue our work on the remaining business.

I also spoke earlier this morning about the urgency that I feel, which I want to express to my colleagues, to stay focused, to complete the appropriations process, as well as the work in the various conferences so we can adjourn at a reasonable time.

All of this work—again, most of this is just from the last several days—means that we have had to work throughout the day each day this past week and into the evening.

Also, because a lot of things we handle in wrap-up, and people are not generally aware because they are not done with a lot of fanfare but are done by unanimous consent of the entire body, I find it useful each evening when I close, but especially at the end of the week, to look at some of those bills.

This week the Senate passed S. 1194, Senator MIKE DEWINE's Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act. I mentioned earlier that Senator DEWINE was instrumental in putting together the amendment on HIV/AIDS to the foreign operations bill, which we passed as well.

The bill S. 1768, the National Flood Insurance Program Reauthorization Act, which was introduced by Senator BUNNING, was passed.

We are still hoping today to make progress on the military tax fairness bill. This bill is intended to hopefully level the playing field with respect to tax policy for many members of the Armed Forces. I know there is currently an objection, but I encourage those people who objected to in the next few minutes or hours, whatever it takes, look at that bill and hopefully be able to clear that as soon as possible.

Senator INHOFE's bill, S. 1757 relating to the Kennedy Center reauthorization, was just cleared by both sides. There was another bill from Senator SPECTER and the Veterans' Committee, S. 1132, the veterans benefits bill, an important