

Between the House and the Senate, over 20 different hearings were held during August. I thank our colleagues for working very hard in collecting information and assessing people's ideas and thoughts from experts from around the world—from around the country and around the world—on the recommendations that were made by the 9/11 Commission.

Our meeting yesterday was another step at the committee level and on the floor of the Senate, as we are on the Homeland Security bill and as we address other bills, and in meetings such as at the White House. There is a real bipartisan commitment to making progress, not a knee-jerk reaction but progress on intelligence reform.

The President discussed with us his plan to complete the reorganization of the executive branch, consistent with those recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. He asked for our support. He says he does expect legislation, recognizing that once we leave in October, we will have November and January when we are not in session, and it is important for this reorganization to take place.

I think there was clear support for what the President presented yesterday, a general consensus that we need to continue to move forward.

As I outlined on Tuesday, and as the Democratic leader and I outlined prior to the recess, immediately after the 9/11 Commission report, we have two arms in this body addressing the recommendations. First, in no particular order, but to look outside this body, what is going on in the executive branch, and that has been delegated to the appropriate committee of jurisdiction, the Governmental Affairs Committee, under the very able leadership of Senator COLLINS and Senator LIEBERMAN. They worked through August diligently collecting information on this assignment.

There are many committees of jurisdiction, and those committees have participated with the Governmental Affairs Committee. They will likely mark up specific legislation the week of September 20, and then that bill will be brought to the floor the following week.

The only reason I am that specific about days is to share with our colleagues the sense of urgency and the sense that we do not have that many legislative days.

What is in that bill specifically and how far it goes is really up to that committee, taking the very best from all of the committees and all of our colleagues in the Senate, as well as the advice of outside experts. That is one arm.

The other arm addresses the internal reform that really applies to two very important of the 41 recommendations by the 9/11 Commission, and that the Democratic leader and I have delegated to a task force that has been appointed to collect information and to discuss that information and to advise us how best to proceed.

Our majority and minority whips, Senator MCCONNELL and Senator REID, are representing the chairs of that task force; that is, to look at the best way the Senate should be organized in this newly transformed world, internal organization, committees, new committees, changing jurisdiction. It is a tough issue because in each case it involves a change where somebody has to give up something or, in their mind, they are giving up something.

The good thing about it is it is going to be bipartisan, working together. We are talking about the safety and security of the American people, and when people say this sort of task cannot be done in a highly charged political environment with Presidential races and races in this body, when it comes down to the safety and security of the American people and the appropriate oversight of the intelligence upon which that safety and security is protected, partisanship gets put aside.

We are on a very tight schedule. There is a lot to be discussed, a lot to be debated. I am confident that with the focus and with the bipartisan effort we will get this done.

Quickly, and it has been covered a little bit in the press today, the President's plan calls for a number of substantial changes. First and foremost is the appointment of the national intelligence director—people are now getting comfortable with this—the "NID," which is the national intelligence director.

As the President described, the post would be as follows: The new director would be appointed by and report to the President, to be confirmed by the Senate. He or she will act as the principal adviser to the President. He or she would not be located in the Executive Office of the President or serve as a member of the President's Cabinet.

The real news, if one looks at the headlines and the interpretation of what the President says, is this full budget authority by the national intelligence director. That director would be responsible for developing objectives and guidance for the intelligence community to ensure the timely and effective collection, analysis, processing, and dissemination of national intelligence for the country; of determining and establishing requirements and priorities for intelligence collection; of establishing intelligence analysis and production priorities for the intelligence community, and directing the national counterterrorism center.

The NID would have full budget authority over the national foreign intelligence program appropriation and would have the necessary authority to carry out reforms we agree are so crucial to our Nation's security.

There are a lot more details and these details will be coming forward over the next several days, but this short description gives a general outline of the direction the President has requested that we move.

The purpose of creating this new post is to improve how we collect data, ana-

lyze data, and how we act upon intelligence data across agencies in order to strengthen America's defenses and stop terrorism before it ever hits. This will make us safer abroad and I believe it will clearly make us safer and more secure at home.

I commend the President for his decisive leadership in this regard. He is committed to protecting the American people. As the President pointed out yesterday, many of the reforms suggested by the 9/11 Commission report had been and were being addressed by the administration. Mention was made yesterday that the administration had addressed 36 of the Commission's 41 recommendations.

I look forward to working with leaders on both sides of the aisle and with both Chambers of Congress. It is going to take a lot of coordination working in the House, the Senate, and the administration. We do not have very much time. We have 22 legislative days remaining in this body, but I know there is bipartisan agreement on the security of the United States and that agreement means we cannot wait and push this off until sometime in the future.

How much is addressed and what the specifics are has not yet been determined, and that is what is being worked on at the committee level and at the task force level right now. Protecting our fellow Americans from attack is the Government's highest duty. From the Oval Office to the Capitol steps, we are working hard to move America forward and to win this war on terror. That will very much be the focus of the Senate for the next 22 days, the security and safety of the American people.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I compliment the majority leader on his comments regarding the response to the 9/11 Commission. He and I have worked very closely together, and I share his view that it has been a laudable bipartisan effort.

As he has noted, our purpose is to address the recommendations made by the 9/11 Commission on two levels: the executive branch, which is largely the responsibility of the Governmental Affairs Committee, and the legislative branch, which is going to be the responsibility of our task force. Both groups are doing the work that we would hope they would. They have invested a good deal of time already. I share his view that there is an urgency to this important effort, and I hope we can continue to work in the manner with which all Members so far have demonstrated; that is, a commitment to a real bipartisan approach to resolving the many challenges that we face.