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Senate

The Senate met at 9:45 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, the Giver and Lord of life, to You we lift our hearts and in You we put our trust. Keep us from doing less than our best. Show us your way and teach us Your path. Lead us to Your truth, Lord, and we will live with abundance.

Today, give our Senators words that will bring light, hope, and peace. Let their speech be seasoned with a humility that seeks first to understand before it is understood. As they strive to be forces for good, give them the contentment that comes from an earnest desire to please You. Give all of us the power to rule our spirits, so that we may bring glory to Your Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leader time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 minutes, with the first half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee and the second half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning we will begin with a 1-hour period for morning business to allow Senators to begin to make statements. Following that time, we will return to consideration of the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill. In order to finish that bill in the next day or two, we will need the cooperation of all Senators, and that is our objective. Senators SHELBY and MIKULSKI will be managing the bill and I expect a full day of consideration on that legislation. Rollcall votes will occur today and tonight on amendments, although we are making every effort to accommodate the Judiciary Committee over the course of the day in their hearings on the nomination of Judge Roberts.

At this time, we have one vote scheduled this afternoon and that vote will be at 12:30 on the passage of S.J. Res. 20, a resolution of disapproval regarding a set of EPA regulations. Following that vote, we will recess briefly until 2:15 for our weekly policy luncheons.

MEETING WITH IRAQI PRESIDENT JALAL TALABANI

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, later today, several of our Senate colleagues and I will have the honor of hosting interim Iraqi President Jalal Talabani and members of his cabinet in the U.S. Capitol. President Talabani was elected in April of this year. Since then, we have seen the Iraqis form their first democratically elected Government in over half a century. We have also witnessed complex and painstaking negotiations to draft a permanent Iraqi constitution. That historic document, that hopeful document, will be put to the people October 15, which is one short month away.

The draft Iraqi constitution is a solid foundation for a democratic Iraq. It establishes a true democracy, a democratic system in which the voice of all Iraqis will be heard, human rights will be protected, the rule of law will be respected, and women will be full and equal political partners. It is a product of deliberate negotiations that included letters from all of Iraq's ethnic and religious groups. The process required enormous patience and flexibility—in other words, the tools of the democratic process—and it required great courage.

In the face of constant terrorist threats and violence, the Iraqi people showed once again their determination to secure their rights and their future as a free and democratic nation. Garnering support for the new constitution is now one of President Talabani's most pressing tasks. In our meeting today, I will urge President Talabani to continue his efforts to reach out to all segments of Iraq's diverse population. It is vital that Iraqis of all walks of life participate in this referendum next month.

It is also vital that the Sunni population rally behind this constitution and the framework of democracy and the governance it establishes. The Sunnis have raised concerns about federalism, about the role of Sharia law, and the allocation of oil revenues. These are all important issues that concern all of us as well.

I look forward to hearing President Talabani's response in our discussions today. I also look forward to learning more from the President about conditions on the ground, his views on the security situation, the training and equipping of Iraqi security forces, and the pace of economic reconstruction and revitalization. I will report back to this body either later today or tomorrow what I learned.

In the meantime, I urge my Senate colleagues to continue to support the democratic aspirations of the Iraqi

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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people in their efforts to secure their liberty and to fulfill their democratic potential. This is an extraordinary opportunity to change the course of history and bring peace and stability to the heart of the Middle East. The challenge is great, but we must persevere. America's security will depend on it. We cannot allow the terrorists to achieve their twisted aims and we cannot allow Iraq to fall into chaos or sectarian violence or return to those days of brutal tyranny and support for the terrorists.

By the same token, Iraqis must continue to persevere as well. They must defeat the terrorists. They must deny them sanctuary in their communities. They must reject their heinous philosophy of murder.

Freedom for Iraq is essential for freedom at home, and that is why we must continue to stand alongside our Iraqi partners. Over time, we will step aside as they assume complete responsibility for their security and for their future.

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LOTT. Could I inquire, is the leader prepared to speak or could I go ahead and make some remarks?

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is in a period for morning business. The majority is in control of the first half of the time.

IN THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE KATRINA

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I observe that the President pro tempore of the Senate is looking quite spiffy this morning in his bow tie.

At this point in my life, any ray of light and happiness is welcomed. I will take a few minutes to sort of bring up to date my feelings about what is happening in the aftermath of Katrina.

I want my colleagues to know that there are some positive developments. It is hard to know that or decipher that if one listens to the media and the negative things. I admit it is not a perfect situation, but each day a little progress is being made.

My staff and I are staying in touch with mayors, supervisors, State officials, and volunteer organizations, and we do feel we are making some headway. I again want to emphasize, though, this is an overwhelming disaster that is in many ways too much for human beings to comprehend or contend with. It is going to take time, patience, diligence, effort, and, yes, money, that we must count on from voluntary contributions and the Federal Government.

I do think we are making some progress. Right now the biggest prob-

lem is probably temporary housing. After disasters, there are always stages. There is the immediate aftermath where people are trying to get into the devastated area, trying to save lives, then trying to get basics such as water, food, generators, and gasoline. Then there is the move into the early cleanup and the need for temporary housing. We are kind of in that phase.

It is very hard to deal with the logistics of moving temporary housing, whether it is ships or trailers, into the area to be staged to move individuals. That takes time. It is very difficult. It happens after every hurricane and probably after every disaster. If we are looking for a place where we need to find a way to move fast and do a better job, emergency housing is probably one of those we should focus on.

I want to thank my colleagues again on both sides of the aisle for their letters, their calls, their expressions of concern and sympathy. Beyond that, I want to thank Senators who have taken personal action, things one would never have dreamed of, such as the Senator from Alaska, who has made a very generous offer. We needed tetanus shots. The Senator from New Jersey, Mr. CORZINE, helped us get the tetanus shots we needed. I could go through the entire Chamber and name Republicans and Democrats, people from all over America, who have taken helpful actions.

At least once a week, I want to come to the floor and speak briefly about the good things. There will be plenty of time to try to find a way to make things better in the future. I do hope the Senate will not pass a series of rifleshot pieces of legislation, well intentioned and needed quickly—we need that—but I hope we will look at a broader recovery effort, something that will make sure the area does not just recover and rebuild and get the economy growing but we do it in a way that will be magnificent for the people, the area, and the country. We can learn from this for other parts of the country when disasters hit.

We have the immediate problem, we have the short-term needs, and we have the long-term needs that we need to think about a little bit. It is hard to be patient when you are flat on your back. But I do think, before we start setting up commissions to do this, a czar to do that, rebuilding authority to supervise something else, let's think those through carefully first. I am counting on my colleagues in the Senate, the committee chairmen particularly, to think about that. But also we have to make sure our leadership pulls us together and we coordinate our efforts.

I want to focus on two areas without which we could not have made it. One is the military. We know how valuable our men and women in uniform are. But we couldn't have made it without the Coast Guard, without the National Guard, without the 82nd Airborne, without General Honore, and without

Thad Allen, Coast Guard Chief of Staff now in charge of recovery in Louisiana and Mississippi, without the thousands of troops who came in, restored order, and started cutting through the debris and providing help, the Seabees out of Gulfport, MS. By the time we got to the end of the first week, we had a battalion in every county in Mississippi.

They were doing their work. Nobody was directing them. They found a problem and they got it done. So let's not have any thought by Active-Duty military personnel, or anybody, that we should not think about our National Guard in terms of disaster assistance and to make sure they have the equipment to cut through and get through and deliver the supplies we need. When I flew over New Orleans 10 days ago, it was like a war zone. We had helicopters coming through with triaged patients. We had helicopters with water buckets. We had helicopters dropping food. We had helicopters picking up people. It was magnificent and marvelous.

Before this is over, I will have a long list of individual stories about the military and particular units that went beyond the call of duty.

Some people are saying the Federal Government has not done this or the Federal Government has not done that. Let me say when the National Guard and our military arrive on the scene, things change. We could not have made it without them, period. People would have died, many people would have died were it not for the Coast Guard and National Guard and our regular military. We have turned to our Navy, every one of our branches. Keesler Air Force Base has been a major staging center and helped thousands of people.

The other area I want to acknowledge, once again, is the incredible human kindness and initiative of individuals, volunteers, faith-based groups of all kinds, and charitable groups. I told the story last week about a group of men who came from Burke, FL, with a Bobcat and a front-end loader. They showed up at my yard and said: Can we help? I asked them where they were from. I think they were from a church in Burke, FL. I didn't get their names. There was too much going on. I said: Could you please clear the road in that area so we can get trucks and equipment in there? Can you help that lady get into her house because you couldn't even get in to see what was left.

They went to work. I saw them off and on all day. I never talked with them again. They just went to work. Through voluntarism, people have shown up with generators and chain saws and said: Where can I help? From all over the region—from all over America. I know personally of several churches. I will not start by denomination, but let me say groups of all faiths and denominations, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and probably Muslim, too. They all went to work.

One I am particularly aware of was Christ United Methodist in Jackson,