

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. WARNER. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SUNUNU). Without objection, it is so ordered.

## MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WARNER. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

(The remarks of Mr. WARNER pertaining to the introduction of S. 2600 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. I appreciate the courtesy of my friends, the distinguished Senator from Oregon and the leader, Senator BYRD, for allowing me to speak for a few minutes. He has been waiting a long time.

## LEAK OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, yesterday the American people received the shocking news that the Vice President's former chief of staff, Scooter Libby, may have acted on direct orders from President Bush when he leaked classified intelligence information to reporters. It is an understatement to say that this is a serious allegation with national security consequences. It directly contradicts previous statements made by the President. It continues a pattern of misleading America by this Bush White House. It raises somber and troubling questions about the Bush administration's candor with Congress and the American people.

Today, I come to the floor to request answers on behalf of our troops, their families, and the American people. For years President Bush has denied knowing about conversations between his top aides and Washington reporters, conversations where his aides, like Scooter Libby, sought to justify the war in Iraq and discredit the White House's critics by leaking national security secrets. In fact, President Bush is on record clearly, in September of 2003, as saying:

I don't know of anybody in my administration who leaked classified information. If somebody did leak classified information, I'd like to know it, and we'll take appropriate action.

Yesterday, we found there is much more to the story. According to court records, President Bush may have personally authorized the very leaks he denied knowing anything about. In light of this disturbing news, we need to hear from President Bush which of these is true: His comments in 2003 or

the statements made by the Vice President's chief of staff. Only the President can put this matter to rest.

Harry Truman had on his desk in the Oval Office a plaque. It said: "The buck stops here." In George Bush's White House, perhaps he should put one that says: The leaks start here.

He, the President of the United States, must tell the American people whether President Bush's Oval Office is a place where the buck stops or the leaks start. This is a question he alone must answer, not a spokesman, not a statement, only the President of the United States.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I, too, thank the Senator from West Virginia for his courtesy. I ask unanimous consent to speak this afternoon for up to 15 minutes.

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

## WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS FROM IRAQ

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise to offer a simple proposition: Congress should act like a coequal branch of Government and vote on whether to keep American troops in Iraq for at least 3 more years. Late last month, the President told the American people that it is his intent to keep American soldiers in Iraq through the end of his term in office. He has never before made such a sweeping commitment. When the Senate voted in October of 2002 to send troops to Iraq, few Americans believed then that the U.S. military would be in Iraq in 2006, let alone 2009 or beyond. Based on what the Bush administration said then, Americans would be justified in thinking that by now Iraq would be free and democratic. Based on what the Bush administration said then, Americans would be justified in thinking that by now Iraq would be stable and self-supporting. Based on what the Bush administration said then, Americans would be justified in thinking that by now the vast majority of U.S. forces, if not all of them, would be safely back home.

Unfortunately, the rosy forecast put out by the White House and the Pentagon in 2002 perished in the harsh reality of Iraq.

The failure to plan for the post-war period has thus far created less security for the world, greater heartache for Iraq, and extraordinary costs for America.

As of today, neither the American people nor the Congress knows how the President intends to get American troops out of Iraq. Instead, virtually every day, the administration offers a new theory for how discouraging events on the ground in Iraq are actually positive signs.

Here is what is indisputable: 2,348 American soldiers are dead, 17,469 are injured, and 262 billion taxpayer dollars have been spent.

If our troops remain in Iraq for at least 3 more years, how many more will die, how many more will be injured? How many more hundreds of billions of dollars will it cost?

By all accounts, the insurgency remains strong and is constantly attacking and killing American soldiers, Iraqi soldiers, and Iraqi civilians. Every day there is another bombing, another brutal image on the TV that reflects the chaos that passes for an average day in Iraq.

Sectarian violence is rampant. The ethnic strife is so grave that Shiites and Sunnis living in mixed neighborhoods are fleeing for the safety of ethnic enclaves.

In recent months, there have been more and more groups of bodies found—hands bound, shot in the back of the head or beheaded—and many Iraqis have come to believe that their own Iraqi Interior Ministry is participating in these death squad-style killings.

According to Ambassador Khalilzad, the "potential is there" for all-out civil war. That, my friends, is an understatement. As former Prime Minister Allawi concedes, a low-level civil war is already being waged in Iraq.

The so-called "enduring bases" that the Pentagon has built in Iraq certainly create the appearance that the Bush administration intends for the United States to occupy Iraq indefinitely, unnecessarily fostering ill-will among the Iraqi population and throughout the Arab world.

Oil production, household fuel availability, and electricity production are lower than they were 2 years ago. Iraqis have electricity half of each day. About 32 percent of Iraqis are unemployed.

The list of problems that plague Iraq goes on and on.

Supporters of the war tout the Iraqi forces that are standing up and taking responsibility for security. Yet it has been reported that not a single Iraqi security force battalion can operate without U.S. assistance. The Iraqi police force is plagued by absenteeism and militia infiltration. The level of incompetence is high enough that U.S. forces are reluctant to hand over their best weapons to the Iraqis.

You will also hear supporters of the war point to the three elections as proof of progress. Yes, there have been elections. But as the current impasse makes clear, elections are just the beginning. And while those elected have been deliberating for the past 3 months, unable to reach consensus over the makeup of the new Iraqi Government, insurgents have been exploiting the power vacuum to kill, to maim, and to instill terror and fear.

Supporters of the war will also point to our reconstruction efforts. But billions of reconstruction dollars have been misused, misspent, or lost by American contractors, like Halliburton, and Iraqi ministries, including the Ministry of Oil.