

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, we are currently talking to some other Senators about the water resources bill, so I will have more to say about that later. In the meantime, I will go on to other business.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be 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.

IRAQ

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today marks a significant milestone for Iraq—and for coalition forces. According to Ambassador Khalilzad, Muthanna will become the first province in which civilian Iraqis take charge of Iraqi security forces in that province. For the first time, the day-to-day security of the Iraqi people living in Muthanna will be in the hands of a civilian Iraqi.

For the half million people living in Muthanna, this means a tangible change in the security and governance of the province. Since 2003, American and coalition forces—the Australians, the British, and the Japanese—have worked together to ensure the security of Muthanna. But beginning today, the Governor of Muthanna will assume supervision of all provincial police. National police and Iraqi army troops within the province will remain under the national control of Prime Minister Jawad al-Maliki.

The provincial Iraqi police service will assume the lead for domestic security in Muthanna. Multinational forces will move out of all urban areas in Muthanna and assume a supporting role. They will provide transition assistance teams and remain postured to assist but only at the approval of Prime Minister al-Maliki.

But more importantly, the handover of Muthanna is a critical step in the chain of events leading to Iraq standing entirely on its own. It marks a new phase in the history of Iraq. It means the increasingly capable Iraqi security forces and Government are ready to operate independently—and to replace coalition forces. And it means the President's strategy for Iraq is working.

Before March 2003, Iraq was a sworn enemy of the United States. The people of Iraq suffered under the oppression of a tyrant. Today, that tyrant is behind bars, and the world is safer and more secure for it.

Iraq's Government has transitioned from a brutal dictatorship to a democracy in which all Iraqis have a voice. Last year, millions of Iraqis defied the threats of the terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, streaming to the poll in three national elections. Iraq's Sunni population participated in greater numbers each time. And just over a month ago,

we eliminated the shadow cast by al-Zarqawi.

The Iraqi security forces are growing, as are their capabilities and responsibilities. In July of 2004, there were no operational Iraqi Army division or brigade headquarters. In just 2 years, 2 divisions, 14 brigades, and 57 battalions control their own area of responsibility; 28 authorized national police units are in the fight with 10 battalions in the lead. Over 264,000 trained and equipped Iraqi security forces are taking the battle to the enemy.

Iraq now has a free and independent media. Thousands of reconstruction projects are in the works, slowly but surely strengthening Iraq's infrastructure and economy. And a fully constitutional national Unity government representing all Iraqi people is finally in place.

Many challenges remain ahead. But today is an important step toward a free, democratic, and prosperous Iraq governed by the rule of law. We—the United States and our coalition allies—must continue to train and equip Iraqi security and police forces to ensure Iraq's 17 other provinces are fully prepared to follow in Muthanna's footsteps. As Iraqi forces stand in, coalition forces will step aside, and we will be one step closer to bringing our troops home.

In a region plagued by radicalism and instability, today's transfer is a critical milestone. It means we are one step closer to peace and stability, and it means Iraq is one step closer to assuming its rightful place in the global community of democratic nations.

CONDEMNING THE ACTS OF WAR PERPETRATED AGAINST ISRAEL BY HEZBOLLAH FORCES

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I rise because of the recent attacks on Israel. The most recently breaking news: rocket attacks on the city of Haifa in Israel, which clearly represents an escalation of the attack from Lebanon. Therefore, I do rise to condemn the acts of war perpetrated against the nation of Israel by Hezbollah forces operating in southern Lebanon.

Dozens of Katyusha rockets were fired at northern Israel on Wednesday and Thursday, and additional salvos have continued to rain down. Israeli soldiers were attacked as they attempted to respond to this unprovoked assault across an internationally recognized border. As a result of this aggression, eight Israeli soldiers are dead, two more are prisoners of Hezbollah, and the citizens of northern Israel are living in fear.

I call on the international community to support Israel in its attempts to end terrorist operations in southern Lebanon, free the captive soldiers, and restore its territorial security.

In the name of peace, Israeli forces withdrew from all Lebanese territory in the year 2000. The United Nations recognized this withdrawal as fully

compliant with all relative Security Council resolutions. Unfortunately, the government in Beirut has not done its part to ensure that this disengagement enhanced the security of both nations.

It is not surprising since 14 members of Lebanon's parliament and two cabinet ministers are members of Hezbollah. The Lebanese Government, which refuses to crack down on these terrorists, must be held accountable. In addition, Syria and Iran, whose governments sponsor Hezbollah's activities, must be condemned and, if they do not cease this support, sanctioned harshly.

I regret to say we will probably witness more violence in the days and weeks ahead. Many innocent people on both sides of the border will likely suffer. It is incumbent on the United States and the international community to stand by Israel as she fights foreign-sponsored aggression on her borders, aggression that no sovereign nation could possibly be expected to tolerate.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I was dismayed to hear of the recent reprehensible actions taken by the terrorist group Hezbollah, in kidnapping two Israeli soldiers. This is an act of cowardice and also grimly unsurprising. Supported by both Syria and Iran, Hezbollah has, for almost a quarter of a century, targeted freedom; whether that be U.S. marines in 1983 in Beirut, U.S. airmen in the Khobar Towers tragedy, or repeated deadly attacks against innocent Israelis and ongoing weapons' stockpiling. Besides regularly supplying weapons to Hezbollah, Iran and Syria are also responsible for donating an estimated \$100 million per year to Hezbollah. The Lebanese government, of which Hezbollah is an active part, bears a full measure of responsibility for this act of war against Israel, and Israel has a right, under international law, to take actions necessary to rescue her sons. Israel fully withdrew from southern Lebanon in May 2000. This move by Israel was certified by the U.N. Security Council as having met the requirements of U.N. Security Council Resolution 425, which called for an Israeli withdrawal and for Lebanon to assert control over the area vacated by Israel.

The appropriate, reasonable and legal response to the brutality and dishonor of terrorism is proactive self-defense. We would do no different were these young men our own. Israel continues to be a force for freedom and democracy and as a friend and ally to the United States, deserves our full backing during this difficult time. Furthermore, as this body has reaffirmed time and again, we fully reject and denounce the terrorist activities fomented by both Iran and Syria. It is my fervent hope that those who dictate the activities of Hezbollah, both inside Lebanon and outside its borders, will quickly see the futility of this course of action, and make a move for peace and stability rather than chaos and war.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise today to talk briefly about the