

for Preparedness, may require.

“(h) REPORTS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of the Port Security Improvement Act of 2006, the Secretary, acting through the Commandant of the Coast Guard, shall submit a report to Congress, in a secure format, describing the methodology used to allocate port security grant funds on the basis of risk.”

CONSTITUTION DAY AND DEMOCRATIC OBSTRUCTION

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, yesterday, September 17, marked the 219th anniversary of one of the most significant events in U.S. history. On September 17, 1787, 219 years ago, 39 brave men signed the U.S. Constitution.

We are all familiar with the Preamble of the Constitution:

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Today across the nation, children in each and every classroom are celebrating the birthday of our Constitution. Very likely, they are reciting this very same Preamble. Many are, no doubt, struggling through this seemingly archaic syntax to come to distill its purpose. These children are asking themselves the same questions we in the Senate face each day on the Senate floor: What does it mean to establish justice? What does it mean to ensure domestic tranquility; to provide for the common defense; to promote the general welfare; to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity?

In the midst of debate, it is temptingly easy to mire ourselves in the intricacies of legislation, and we spend hours in committees negotiating a phrase or a single word. But let's not forget the purpose behind our debates. Mr. President, 219 years ago, 39 men fulfilled the promise, fulfilled the vision of the Declaration of Independence by signing the Constitution. Today, the legacy depends on us. As citizens and as Senators, it is our duty to ensure that the values and purposes embodied by the Constitution continue to be the values that define our daily life.

Over the past few months, we have had many opportunities to do just that: the PATRIOT Act, Defense appropriations, border security, the Voting Rights Act, the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act, pension reform, and just last week, port security.

But too often my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have inhibited the fulfillment of our duty. They have relied on obstruction and thrown up roadblocks at every opportunity. They have let politics get in the way of sound policy and purpose. That is unacceptable.

We have only a few days left in this session. This week, we will vote on the nomination of Alice Fisher to be an Assistant Attorney General for the Crimi-

nal Division at the Department of Justice. But it has taken months and months to get to this point—months and months of obstruction. We have other key national security nominees who need to be confirmed. These are positions vital to our continued safety and security, but at every turn we find obstruction instead of confirmation.

As we move forward, I urge my colleagues to review our Constitution's Preamble, to consider anew our purpose here in the Senate, and to let that purpose guide our debate and action here on the Senate floor.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S MISTAKES IN THE IRAQ WAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, for more than 3 years, this Congress, which has been given the name of the “do-nothing Congress,” has turned a blind eye to the intractable war in Iraq, ignoring the administration's many mistakes and allowing it to stay on a failed course.

Here we are, with 6 days left in the 109th Congress, and the Republicans, who control the House and Senate and the White House, have not held one hearing—not one—into the President's wartime failures. During the Civil War, President Lincoln was faced continually with oversight hearings by his Congress. Of course, we know during World War II, there were a number of commissions. The most famous was that conducted by Senator Harry Truman of Missouri, which led to his becoming Vice President. Some say, but for that he would not have been chosen as Vice President. What was the Truman Commission? It was to determine what was going on with World War II. Was money being wasted? Were troop levels right? Korean war hearings were also held, and the same for the Vietnam war. But for this war, none—even though this war has taken longer than it took to settle the differences in the European theater in World War II. Soon it will be the same amount of time that we were able to beat Japan.

This Republican Congress has wasted 20 months on horse slaughtering; the Schiavo case, dealing with someone's personal relationship, which should not even have been before this body; gay marriage; the nuclear option; flag burning; repealing the estate tax. But they could not find a day for some time to look at the President's mistakes, missteps, and misconduct, which have hurt American security and plunged Iraq into a civil war—not a day.

Yesterday's Washington Post newspaper brought the latest indictment of the Bush incompetence in Iraq, in a front-page story entitled “Ties to GOP Trumped Know-How Among Staff Sent

to Rebuild Iraq.” Mr. President, this article says a lot of things, but here is some of it:

... applicants didn't need to be experts in the Middle East or in post-conflict reconstruction. What seemed most important was loyalty to the Bush administration.

It is interesting to note that the person selected to do this is a man by the name of O'Beirne. I saw that name and it flashed because I have been on programs with a woman by the name of Kate O'Beirne. And I'll be darned, it happened to be her husband who was chosen to find the people to take care of postwar Iraq.

Here are some of the questions that were asked of the applicants: “Did you vote for George W. Bush in 2000?” They even asked questions about how the applicant felt about *Roe v. Wade*. People being interviewed for purposes of helping rebuild war-damaged Iraq were asked questions on *Roe v. Wade*. The questions had nothing to do with one's competence, their educational background, or their experience. The article says that

... from April 2003 to June 2004 [it was clear that O'Beirne] lacked vital skills and experience

to do what he was required to do. It says:

A 24-year-old who had never worked in finance—but had applied for a White House job—was sent to reopen Baghdad's stock exchange. The daughter of a prominent neoconservative commentator and a recent graduate from an evangelical university for home-schooled children were tapped to manage Iraq's \$13 billion budget, even though they didn't have a background in accounting.

The article also says:

Interviews with scores of former CPA personnel over the past two years depict an organization that was dominated—and ultimately hobbled—by administration ideologues.

“We didn't tap—and it should have started from the White House on down—just didn't tap the right people to do this job,” said Frederick Smith, who served as deputy director of the DPA's Washington office. “It was a tough, tough job. Instead we got people who went out there because of their political leanings.”

But many CPA staff members were more interested in other things: in instituting a flat tax—

People were sent there with no background, no education, no academic experience, and set out to create a flat tax in Iraq.

They were interested “in selling off government assets, in ending food rations and otherwise fashioning a new nation that looked a lot like the United States. Many of them spent their days cloistered in the Green Zone, a walled-off enclave in central Baghdad with towering palms, posh villas, well-stocked bars and resort-size swimming pools.”

Mr. President, this picture says it all. Here is Paul Bremmer. They dumped General Garner after a few weeks and brought Bremmer in. Here he is, on his throne—on his throne. He is on a throne surrounded by Iraqis.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. REID. I will be happy to yield for a question.

Mr. DURBIN. Can the Senator refresh my memory? Was Mr. Bremmer the recipient of a gold medal or something from the President? Didn't he receive some high decoration or medal for his performance in Iraq?

Mr. REID. The answer is, yes, he received that. I assume one would expect that from somebody who had a throne while he was over there.

Mr. DURBIN. Isn't it also true that George Tenet, who was responsible for the intelligence that was so bad that led us into the war in Iraq, got a medal from the President the same day?

Mr. REID. That is true.

Mr. DURBIN. Did Michael Brown with FEMA receive a gold medal from the White House before he was dismissed?

Mr. REID. I don't think he did. Even though he was doing a heck of a job, I don't think he obtained a medal from the White House.

Mr. DURBIN. Apparently, these gold medals were being awarded for incompetence. They missed Mr. Brown, but they did give one to Mr. Bremmer.

Mr. REID. The article goes on to say—and I say to my friend and anyone within the sound of my voice:

To recruit the people he wanted, O'Beirne sought resumes from the offices of Republican congressmen, conservative think tanks and GOP activists. He discarded applications from those his staff deemed ideologically suspect, even if the applicants possessed Arab language skills or postwar rebuilding experience.

Smith said O'Beirne once pointed to a young man's resume and pronounced him "an ideal candidate." His chief qualification was that had he worked for the Republican Party in Florida during the presidential election recount in 2000.

I am not making this up. This is hard to comprehend.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Senator yield for another question?

Mr. REID. I will be happy to.

Mr. DURBIN. I am trying to recall the exact number—it was in the billions of dollars—that we gave to the President for the reconstruction of Iraq; is that not true?

Mr. REID. It started out at \$18 billion. But as the Senator from Illinois will remember, part of that money, stacks of one-hundred-dollar bills, was used by some of the contractors who were sent over there to play football games—some of these same people.

Mr. DURBIN. It is also true, is it not, that the Democratic policy conference has been holding hearings—in fact, I think it is the only agency on the Hill holding hearings—on this waste and abuse, this profiteering and corruption at the expense of American taxpayers and even, equally important—more importantly—at the expense of our troops?

Mr. REID. I say to my friend, this war is approaching 3½ years, and there has not been a single congressional

oversight hearing on the conduct of the war. This war has now cost us, the American taxpayers, about \$325 billion. There has not been a single congressional oversight hearing on the war.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask the Senator from Nevada if he might comment on this as well: Are we not in a situation where the President has told us that he wants to "stay the course" in Iraq, and Vice President CHENEY, when asked a week ago, said he wouldn't change a thing in the way they have done this war in Iraq? Is it very clear that unless there is a change in leadership in this town soon, we are going to continue down this disastrous course, exposing our soldiers to danger every single day, their families to the anxiety of separation, and the taxpayers of this country to billions and billions of dollars more being spent that don't make us any safer?

Mr. REID. I say to my friend, I spent the weekend reading a book. I did other things. I spent a lot of time on an airplane. The book is called "Fiasco," written by a man named Thomas Ricks who has spent his life covering the military. He has written books on the military. I don't know his political persuasion. This book is on the best seller's list of the New York Times.

In this book, he talks in such detail about what has happened as a result of the incompetence of this administration to our valiant fighting men and women over there. I recommend the book to anyone. It is a searing indictment of this administration. It is in keeping with what this article is all about.

Another paragraph:

One former CPA employee who had an office near O'Beirne's wrote an e-mail to a friend describing the recruitment process: "I watched resumes of immensely talented individuals who had sought out CPA to help the country thrown in the trash because their adherence to 'the President's vision for Iraq' (a frequently heard phrase at CPA) was 'uncertain.' I saw senior civil servants from agencies like Treasury, Energy . . . and Commerce denied advisory positions in Baghdad that were instead handed to prominent RNC (Republican National Committee) contributors."

One staffer said:

I'm not here for the Iraqis, I'm here for George Bush."

Mr. President, this is really a sad commentary. Important jobs, such as rebuilding the Iraq stock exchange, were given to applicants who agreed with the President on *Roe v. Wade*. Qualified individuals were turned down for jobs if they didn't vote for Bush in 2000. The children of the President's conservative friends were given authority over the country's \$13 billion budget.

Today in Iraq we are witnessing the terrible consequences of Bush cronyism, and it is our troops, the Iraqi people, and the American people who are paying the price.

Reconstruction has been a failure. The economy is a mess. Thousands are dying. Whole provinces have been lost.

One province, Anbar Province, makes up a third of the country. The military people said it is gone. And the political solution necessary to bring Americans home is nowhere to be found.

The testimony we hear from people such as the people in this newspaper article is unbelievable. We have heard it time and again. The only people who aren't listening are George Bush and this do-nothing Congress.

If the Iraq war has taught us anything, it is that Congress must take seriously its responsibility to hold the executive branch accountable, and it has not happened. For 2 years, Democrats have offered constructive solutions to change course in Iraq and give our troops and the Iraqi people the chance for some type of stability and success. We have said there must be a redeployment of forces this year to transition the mission, to change the mission.

We have said we must resolve the sectarian differences through a political settlement. That is called diplomacy. They need to amend their constitution.

We said they must regionalize the conflict with a contact group or conference to bring in those countries that said they will help.

We need to revitalize, and we can do that as I have indicated: get the countries that said they would help to come in and help. There needs to be a regional solution. We need to rebuild our badly strained U.S. military. There is not a single undeployed Army unit today that is battle ready. That says it all.

A number of generals have witnessed this administration's flawed Iraq policy firsthand, and they have repeatedly called for new civilian leadership at the Pentagon.

I say this with all due respect: I bet if those military personnel weren't working for Government defense contracts, we would have a few more speaking out. But we have had plenty.

In each instance, when the generals speak out, the Republican Congress blocks their efforts and puts their political interests ahead of America's safety.

The war in Iraq has been a diversion from the real war on terror. But this administration and this do-nothing Congress are content to stay the course, even as it makes America less safe and Iraq less stable.

We need a new direction. This Congress has failed.

I yield the floor.

(The remarks of Mr. WYDEN and Mr. BENNETT pertaining to the introduction of S. 3908 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MURKOWSKI). The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, what is the limitation on speeches at this point?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are currently in morning business, with

Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I may speak for no more than 30 minutes.

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

CONSTITUTION AND CITIZENSHIP DAY

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, yesterday, September 17, the Nation observed Constitution and Citizenship Day. Yesterday, on the Sabbath, the Nation observed Constitution and Citizenship Day. The day marked the 219th anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution. On September 17, 1787, 219 years ago yesterday, an extraordinary convention of American statesmen met in Philadelphia's Independence Hall to adopt our fledgling Nation's fundamental governing principles, codified in the new Constitution. I am happy to glory in my good fortune, the blessing of living in this Nation and under this Constitution—this Constitution which I hold in my hand. I have long been a student of the Constitution, and I do carry it with me, close to my heart. Alexander the Great slept with a copy of the Iliad, written by Homer in the 800s before Christ—a copy of the Iliad under his pillow, they say. I do not sleep with a copy of the Constitution under my pillow, but I carry it close to my heart.

Over the years, I have read deeply about our Founding Fathers and the great national debate that accompanied the development, the adoption, and the ratification of this critical document. This history is enlightening, revealing the lessons of our Founding Fathers, the great lessons of our Founding Fathers and the lessons they learned from ancient history as well as from their own experience as colonists subject to the British King.

As a Member of the Senate, I have many good reasons to want to know more about the Constitution. Yes, I am 89, but I want to know more. The Constitution affects all Americans, and I urge all Americans to learn more about the Constitution. Why? Because it remains as vital to our lives today as it was 219 years ago. That was a long time ago, 219 years. This Constitution affects the structure and operation of our government, a government of laws, not a government of men. Yes, this Constitution, this is the roadmap, this is the cornerstone of our Republic. It dictates who is eligible to run for office and hold office. It dictates who may elect government officials and how those officials—like me, like myself—must conduct themselves while in office. It outlines who does what within the Federal Government and between the Federal Government and these United States. It requires the President, the Chief Executive in the White House—who is he? He is the Chief Executive, but it requires that he, the President of the United States, report. To whom? To the people and to Congress.

The Constitution decides who may declare war. It says, "The Congress shall have the power to declare war." Yes, the Congress. It decides who may appoint Ambassadors, who may levy taxes, who may decide how Federal dollars will be spent. If all of that does not affect every American, I do not know what does.

I firmly believe that our Constitution deserves greater awareness in our national life and in our everyday lives. A distressing number of studies have shown a profound ignorance of and, yes, even indifference to this fundamental document of government. This is it. I hold it in my hands. Of course, more than the Constitution is included in this fine little document that I have and carry in my pocket, but the title of this little book is the "United States Constitution." That is it. This is the pillar of my liberties, the pillar of your liberties, and it is the roadmap by which those who govern shall govern.

Too many citizens have little or no knowledge of this Constitution, from the functions of government to the scope of their own rights and liberties. Did you realize that, every one of you who is within the sound of my voice throughout this great Nation? You may revere the Constitution—and most people do. Yes, they are proud of the Constitution. They revere it. But they do not know what is in it; too many do not know what is in it. Many do.

I think that may also be true of many Members of Congress, many Members of this body. As you know, there are two bodies of Congress. Two bodies make up the Congress, not one body. It may be true of many Members of these two Houses. It may be true of many Members of this House, the Senate of the United States. It may be true of the executive branch officials. Did you hear that it may be true of executive officials, many of them? It may be true of military officials, many military officials and personnel, and members of the news media. Hear me now, yonder on the back benches, those who write, those who question, those who explain: members of the news media.

Few people know why the Constitution was designed the way it was. Few people may understand what the checks and balances contained in our governmental structure are meant to do.

When the Constitutional Convention sent to the States this Constitution for ratification, in 1787, it stimulated an active political debate out there—in the mountains, the hills, and the valleys of this land. It was not a political debate such as we see today—a cacophony of short sound bites and slogans that do not answer the questions or which are aimed only at attacking a political opponent—but a real debate, a real discussion, a real looking at the structure, at the parts of the structure, at the words, at the sentences—yes, a real debate and discussion.

Supporters and opponents wrote pamphlets and published essays that were widely read. Can you imagine

that? They wrote pamphlets, essays that were widely read, widely discussed? The Constitution became a topic of conversation around dinner tables and at public meeting places. Imagine, just imagine—hear me now, imagine that today.

Imagine that happening today. The Federalist Papers—may I say to the pages—read them. The Federalist Papers—not just the Constitution but also the Federalist Papers. Read them. The Federalist Papers, that great defense of the Constitution written by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay—read the Federalist Papers. They were widely printed in newspapers and still more widely read and discussed. The Federalist Papers served as the centerpiece for the debate over the form of government the Constitution created, the form of government this little Constitution created. Yes, I hold it in my hand. Sadly, today there are few people outside of college classes and history and politics who have read the Federalist Papers. They should be read by all Americans who want to understand the Constitution.

Read the Federalist Papers. If you have read them, read them again. It is like reading the Holy Bible. Each time you read it, you will see new things, you will understand new things, new words are being said, new sentences, new thoughts are being expressed, some that you had not seen before.

Madison, Hamilton, and Jay—those great men, Madison Hamilton, and Jay—turned to the mass-communication system of their day, the newspapers. Now, in the 21st century, we have the ability to promote better knowledge and better understanding of the Constitution through the newest form of mass communication—think about that—the Internet. As an excellent resource for Americans on this vital topic, I draw attention to the considerable information about the Constitution that the United States is making available—get that—the United States is making available to the public on the Senate Web site. You hear me. It is there.

By publishing articles in newspapers, Madison, Hamilton, and Jay reached out and touched an audience of thousands. Through the World Wide Web, the Senate's Web site, material on the Constitution can be accessed by an audience of millions, millions of citizens, teachers, and students—people from all around, the world.

In honor of this year's celebration of Constitution Day, the U.S. Senate has included a variety of features on its Web site—at www.senate.gov—to promote a more thorough understanding of our Constitution, the blueprint—here it is—for the Federal Government that still defines and guides us today, I say to the President who sits in the chair. Visitors to the Senate Web site will find many items related to the Constitution. The full text of the Constitution can be viewed, along with annotations and Senate-specific clauses.