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Senate

The Senate met at 9:45 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JIM DEMINT, a Senator from the State of South Carolina.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, our father and our king, we thank You for the gift of this day. We need Your grace, for we cannot offer anything to merit Your favor or gain Your love. Cover our mistakes and failures with Your merciful love and give us Your peace.

In the beginning of time You created the Heavens and laid the Earth's foundation. Now create in our lawmakers a passion to accomplish Your purposes. May they seek Your wisdom and acknowledge Your precepts. Help them to use Your time-honored principles as the litmus test for good decisions. Give them the desire to so honor You that future generations will praise Your righteous Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JIM DEMINT 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, September 26, 2006.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JIM DEMINT, a Senator from the State of South Carolina, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. DEMINT thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today we will begin the session with a 1-hour period of morning business. At the conclusion of the morning business period, we will address the pending bill, H.R. 6061, the secure fence legislation.

I filed cloture on the pending amendment and the underlying bill last night, and I will speak to that process in a moment. I do want to remind everyone that the consent agreement now provides that all first-degree amendments to the secure fence bill must be filed at the desk no later than 2:30 today in order to qualify under rule XXII.

Today we will recess from 12:30 to 2:15 in order to accommodate one of our weekly policy meetings.

To further explain, last night I filed an amendment to the secure fence bill, and that amendment included language to establish the military tribunals, the legislation that is in response to the Hamdan legislation from several months ago which the Supreme Court has handed down, which reflects the agreement announced last week between the President and Senate Republicans. I also filed cloture on this amendment last night, as well as cloture on the secure fence bill. There will be a cloture vote Wednesday on the Hamdan amendment. If that cloture on the amendment is invoked, there would

be time for postcloture debate on the amendment. Once all postcloture time is expired, there would then be a vote on the adoption of the amendment, followed immediately by a cloture vote on the secure fence legislation. All those votes would be Thursday.

I explained that last night, and I explain it again now because it illustrates the procedural moves that have to be made in order to finish this bill with certainty before we depart on Friday or Saturday. It is critical that we do so. The very important, critical, high-value interrogation programs cannot continue until we legislate, and indeed the military tribunals, military commissions cannot take place in terms of trying these enemy combatants until we act.

It is important with regard to what I said for people to understand that the Democratic leader and I and our caucuses are working very hard to get a unanimous consent agreement to consider the Hamdan legislation free-standing. However, last night we did not reach that agreement, or early this morning, but I am very hopeful that we can do so shortly.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there

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



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will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 1 hour, 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.

The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on the importance of national and homeland security and specifically to ensure that we enact the key legislation that we have under consideration necessary to protect our great Nation.

While we have achieved a great deal since 9/11 in the area of homeland security, and we need to acknowledge what we have accomplished, and while we are making great strides, there is still more left to do. The terrorists we are dealing with are not going to cease planning attacks against our country, which is why we are working hard to continually improve the national security of the United States. The fact that there has not been another terrorist attack on domestic soil since September 11, 2001, shows that we have been successful to this point.

To date, we have implemented 37 of the 39 9/11 Commission findings. We have enacted 71 laws on homeland security. We have increased the terrorist watch list to 400,000 persons. We have disrupted at least 15 major terrorist plots or potential plots against America. We have required that every visa holder be fingerprinted before entering the United States. We have frozen nearly \$1.5 billion in terrorist assets. We have convicted 261 accused defendants in terrorism-related cases, and we have killed or taken prisoner a number of al-Qaida leaders around the world, particularly in Iraq, including Al Zarqawi, who was the No. 1 al-Qaida leader in Iraq; including Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, whom we have captured and from whom we have received very valuable information. We have to remember that he was the mastermind of the 9/11 plot.

In the area of port security, Georgia has three ports and is one of the top five States in the handling of some 11 million containers that reach our Nation's shores every year. Georgia plays an important role in the commerce of this country, and that is why I am pleased that Congress has completed a comprehensive port security conference report, which will continue to improve the security of our seaports all around America.

This bill improves a layered security approach to cargo screening and scanning. In Georgia, we will begin augmenting the existing cargo security detection equipment with radiation portal monitors next month to ensure the screening of high-risk containers to stop the illicit import of nuclear and radiological materials. This important

piece of legislation also provides for the development of a plan to ensure the successful resumption of shipping in the event of a terrorist attack. In addition, it mandates a plan to determine when it is feasible to scan containers prior to their reaching the United States. With our national security at stake, we will continue the necessary steps to protect our citizens and, at the same time, balance the flow of commerce.

In the closing weeks of this session, I think it is especially important to ensure that we have the opportunity to take final action on the Defense appropriations bill and the Defense authorization conference report. These vital pieces of legislation will continue to ensure that our military personnel involved in the global war on terrorism, as well as our National Guard personnel at home, have the necessary equipment and resources to do their jobs. We need to ensure that our Guard personnel stationed on the U.S. border can continue in their homeland security and defense roles, enhance the efforts of Border Patrol agents, and be available to support Governors in the case of any natural disaster that may arise.

The Defense appropriations conference report which we will be considering later this week provides \$86 billion for military personnel, \$120 billion for operations and maintenance, \$80 billion for procurement, and \$75 billion for research and development, all to ensure that our Nation's military has the resources they need to carry out the responsibilities that we as a nation have asked of them.

I would also like to ask the leadership in both the House and the Senate to make every effort to take final action on the national Defense authorization conference report this week. It would be a shame on our part not to provide these urgent policies and funding for our troops who so valiantly are defending our Nation today.

In closing, I would like to remind my colleagues what is at stake as we consider these bills and urge them to work to pass legislation this week in support of our Armed Forces. In Iraq, the combined coalition on Iraqi operations continues to target and eliminate al-Qaida operations. Since August 30, over 150 operations have been conducted, resulting in 66 terrorists being killed and over 830 suspected terrorists being detained. On September 12 alone, there was a series of 25 raids in and around Baghdad targeting al-Qaida and Iraqi activities. These raids resulted in the capture of over 70 suspected terrorists, including an associate of Abu Ayyub al-Masri, the new head of al-Qaida in Iraq. The associate was a leader of assassination, kidnapping, and I.E.D cells in Baghdad. Iraqi and coalition forces continue to make tremendous progress in clearing suspect buildings, seizing weapons, moving trash out of neighborhoods, improving electricity, wastewater disposal, and educational opportunities for the Iraqi people.

On the military front, by the end of this month the Iraqi Ground Forces Command, which recently became operational, will assume control of a second Iraqi Army division. And later this month, the Government of Iraq plans to assume control of the Dhi Qar Province. These are the activities that we are funding and supporting by doing our job in the Senate. I commend the work of our military personnel, the Appropriations Committee, and the Armed Services Committee for completing these bills, and I urge my colleagues to adopt them expeditiously.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Hampshire is recognized.

HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, first I want to commend the Senator from Georgia for his excellent statement and discussion on what we are doing on the border and what we are doing generally in the area of fighting terrorism. I simply wanted to bring the Senate up to speed, and to the extent people are observing the Senate operations, the country up to speed—the listeners, anyway, up to speed on what we are doing on the border.

Last night we completed the conference between the House and the Senate on the Homeland Security bill, with Congressman ROGERS chairing the committee for the House and myself chairing it for the Senate. This is a bipartisan bill. It is a bill that passed the Senate 100 to nothing. It is a continuum of a lot of effort that we have made as a Congress to try to upgrade and significantly improve and make much more robust our efforts in order to secure our borders.

I think we all understand that the threat to America comes from many different directions. But as we prioritize threats, the No. 1 issue we have to worry about is someone coming into this country with a weapon of mass destruction.

The No. 2 thing we need to worry about is who is coming into the country and what products are coming into the country. What do those people intend? Hopefully, they are coming in legally. And what are the purposes of the products coming in? Hopefully, the purpose of the products is general commerce. But it is, first, to protect yourself from weapons of mass destruction and, second, to make sure our borders are secure.

In order to accomplish both of those goals, we need to put significant resources into those agencies and efforts which are responsible for addressing those two major issues. This bill, the Homeland Security bill, does exactly that. It puts significant new energy and dollars into detecting and being able to manage a potential weapon of mass destruction that will come into this country. Equally important, it