

downsides of bankruptcy or their alternatives. These lawyers also are dragging down our economy. Bankruptcy should be reserved for those persons who have no other options, not for people who use clever legal advice to make big purchases on the eve of bankruptcy with no intention of ever repaying the debt because they can wipe away their debts clean, no questions asked.

So I will keep a watchful eye on developments in the future. But for now, almost one year later, bankruptcy reform seems to have been a success.

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF ANTHRAX ATTACKS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, In the autumn of 2001, while the Nation was still reeling from the reality of our airplanes being turned into weapons of terror, someone, somewhere, launched another deadly terrorist attack using our postal system to deliver their weapon of choice—anthrax. Those anthrax-laced letters targeting several journalists and public officials, among them Senator Daschle and myself, jarring an already fearful Nation.

Receiving that letter was a chilling and personal reminder that the threat of terrorism was not temporary, nor was it an ocean away. Thankfully, my staff and I were unharmed, but others were not so lucky. The terrorists who sent these letters struck 22 people ranging in age from 7 months to 94 years, and the attacks resulted in the deaths of five Americans. They were people who died by simply touching an envelope—in some cases the mail was addressed to them, and in other instances, it was an envelope meant for someone else. Yet all of these people died as a result of doing what so many of us do every day—our jobs.

Five years after those attacks and 5 years into the global war on terror, there is still no perpetrator who has been arrested or convicted for these attacks. Every year around the time of the anniversary—we learn that the FBI is still working on this case and that it remains a high priority for the Bureau. Many skilled and talented people have worked diligently on this case, bringing to bear some of the most advanced forensic technology in the world.

The victims of the anthrax attacks varied in gender, race, religion, age, economic status and locale, but they all shared in the suffering. The victims who suffered the most were employees of the U.S. Postal Service, of the Department of State, of news organizations and of the Senate, and the aides, the children, and the senior citizens whose mail came in contact with the anthrax-laden letters.

Robert Stevens, a photo editor at The Sun newspaper in Boca Raton, Florida, died on October 5, 2001, at the age of 63. Thomas Morris, Jr., a Washington, DC, postal worker, died on October 21 at the age of 55. Joseph Curseen, also a Washington, DC, postal worker, died on October 22 at the age of

47. Kathy T. Nguyen, a New York City hospital worker, died on October 31 at the age of 61. And Otilie Lundgren, a 94-year-old Connecticut retiree, died on November 21.

Many of those who survived anthrax exposure remain severely debilitated, suffering from chronic cough, fatigue, joint swelling and pain, and memory loss. Several victims have been diagnosed with depression and anxiety and are still tormented by nightmares. Many cannot return to work, and some of those who have returned are unable to do even routine tasks without difficulty. Victims say they communicate very little with one another, mostly fighting their battles alone.

On October 16, 2003, I introduced a bill to amend the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund of 2001 to provide compensation for anthrax victims on the same basis as compensation is provided to victims of September 11. The bill never made it out of the Judiciary Committee. Without this appropriate help, the surviving victims struggle to pay their medical bills and get by on worker's compensation, and many report feeling like they have borne the brunt of the anthrax attacks alone. This surely exacerbates the emotional and psychological difficulties that many anthrax victims experience. Congress should act to help these people, who are victims of the national experience of these terrorist attacks, and they should be treated accordingly.

Congress and the American people hope for answers and for a resolution of this case. We hope that lessons have been learned from it that will help prevent or minimize future biological attacks. In the meantime, let us remember the loss and the suffering of those who fell victim to this deadly episode of terrorism on our soil.

IRAQ AND U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I have listened intently over the past few weeks as the President, members of his Cabinet, and Members of this Chamber have discussed Iraq, the war on terror, and ways to strengthen our national security.

For years, now, I have opposed this administration's policies in Iraq as a diversion from the fight against terrorism. But I have never been so sure of the fact that this administration misunderstands the nature of the threats that face our country. I am also more sure than ever and it gives me no pleasure to say this—that this President is incapable of developing and executing a national security strategy that will make our country safer.

As we marked the fifth anniversary of 9/11 this month, we recalled that tragic day and the lives that were lost in New York, at the Pentagon, and in Pennsylvania. And we all recalled the anger and resolve we felt to fight back against those that attacked us. This

body was united and was supportive of the administration's decision to attack al-Qaida and the Taliban in Afghanistan. No one disputed that decision.

That is because our top priority immediately following 9/11 was defeating the terrorists that attacked us. The American people expected us to devote most of our national security resources to that effort, and rightly so. But unfortunately, 5 years later, our efforts to defeat al-Qaida and its supporters have gone badly astray. The administration took its eye off the ball. Instead of focusing on the pursuit of al-Qaida in Afghanistan, it launched a politically motivated diversion into Iraq—a country with no connection to the terrorists who attacked us. In fact, the President's decision to invade Iraq has emboldened the terrorists and has played into their hands by allowing them to falsely suggest that our fight against terrorism is anti-Muslim and anti-Arab, when nothing could be further from the truth.

But instead of recognizing that our current policy in Iraq is damaging our national security, the President continues to argue that the best way to fight terrorists is to stay in Iraq. He even quotes terrorists to bolster his argument that Iraq is the central front in the war on terror. Just recently, he told the country that Osama bin Laden has proclaimed that the "third world war is raging" in Iraq" and that this is "a war of destiny between infidelity and Islam."

Instead of letting the terrorists decide where we will fight them, the President should remember what he said on September 14, just 2 days after 9/11. He said, and I quote, "[t]his conflict was begun on the timing and terms of others. It will end in a way, and at an hour, of our choosing." The President was right when he said that, and he is wrong to suggest that we must stay in Iraq because that is where the terrorists want to fight us. We must fight the terrorists where they don't want to fight us—and that means engaging in a global campaign, not focusing all of our resources on one country.

The way to win a war against global terrorist networks is not to keep 140,000 American troops in Iraq indefinitely. We will weaken, not strengthen, our national security by continuing to pour a disproportionate level of our military and intelligence and fiscal resources into Iraq.

Unfortunately, because of our disproportionate focus on Iraq, we are not using enough of our military and intelligence capabilities for defeating al-Qaida and other terrorist networks around the world. While we have been distracted in Iraq, terrorist networks have developed new capabilities and found new sources of support throughout the world. We have seen terrorist attacks in India, Morocco, Turkey, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Spain, Great Britain, and elsewhere. The administration has failed to adequately address the terrorist safe haven that has

existed for years in Somalia or the recent instability that has threatened to destabilize the region. And resurgent Taliban forces are contributing to growing levels of instability in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, the U.S. presence in Iraq is being used as a recruiting tool for terrorist organizations from around the world. In Indonesia, home to historically moderate Islamic communities, conservative religious groups are becoming increasingly hostile towards the United States. In countries like Thailand, Nigeria, Mali, the Philippines, and elsewhere, militant groups are using U.S. policies in Iraq to fuel hatred towards the West.

The war in Iraq was, and remains, a war of choice. Some in this body, even those who have questioned the initial rationale for the war, suggest that we have no option but to remain in Iraq indefinitely. That argument is mistaken. We do have a choice, and that is whether we continue to devote so much of our resources to Iraq or whether we devote our resources to waging a global campaign against al-Qaida and its allies. We cannot do both.

If we choose to stay the course in Iraq, that means keeping large numbers of U.S. military personnel in Iraq indefinitely. It means continuing to ask our brave service members to somehow provide a military solution to a political problem, one that will require the will of the Iraqi people to resolve. Our military has achieved its mission in Iraq. Until we redeploy from Iraq, our very presence there will continue to generate new terrorists from around the world that will come to Iraq to attack U.S. troops.

Staying the course also means that our military's readiness levels will continue to deteriorate. It means that a disproportionate level of our military resources will continue to be focused on Iraq while terrorist networks strengthen their efforts worldwide.

The fight against the Taliban and al-Qaida in Afghanistan, too, will continue to suffer, as it has since we invaded Iraq. If we stay the course in Iraq, we won't be able to finish the job in Afghanistan.

Finally, if this were our Nation's choice, the safety of our country would be uncertain, at best. Terrorist organizations and insurgencies around the world will continue to use our presence in Iraq as rallying cry and recruiting slogan. Terrorist networks will continue to increase their sophistication and reach as our military capabilities are strained in Iraq.

I think we can see why this approach plays into the terrorists' hands—and even why bin Laden might suggest that the U.S. presence in Iraq is beneficial to his cause.

Of course, staying the course isn't a necessity.

The alternative is to establish a new national security strategy that addresses the wide-ranging nature of the threats that face our country.

This second choice will require replacing our current self-defeating national security strategy with a comprehensive one to defeat the terrorist networks that attacked us on 9/11. It will require a realignment of our finite resources. And it will also require a change in the way we view and discuss the threat to our country. We must reject phrases like "Islamic fascism," which are inaccurate and potentially offensive to peace-loving Muslims around the world. And we need to understand that there is no "central front" in this war, as the President argues.

The threats to our country are global, unlike any we have encountered in the past. Our enemy is not a state with clearly defined borders. We must respond instead to what is a loose network of terrorist organizations that do not function according to a strict hierarchy. Our enemy isn't one organization. It is a series of highly mobile, diffuse entities that operate largely beyond the reach of our conventional warfighting techniques. The only way to defeat them is to adapt our strategy and our capabilities and to engage the enemy on our terms and by using our advantages.

We have proven that we can not do that with our current approach in Iraq.

This choice—this new strategy—would require redeploying from Iraq and recalibrating our military posture overseas. It would require finishing the job in Afghanistan with increased resources, troops, and equipment. It would require a new form of diplomacy, scrapping the "transformational diplomacy" this administration has used to offend, push away, and ultimately alienate so many of our friends and allies, and replacing it with an aggressive, multilateral approach that would leverage the strength of our friends to defeat our common enemies.

It would also require the infusion of new capabilities and strength for our Armed Forces. By freeing up our special forces assets and redeploying our military power from Iraq, we would be better positioned to handle global threats and future contingencies. Our current state of readiness is unacceptable and must be repaired. Our National Guard, too, must be capable of responding to natural disasters and future contingencies.

Finally, this new approach would make our country safer. It would enable our Government to spend time addressing the wide range of threats our country faces. It would free up strategic capacity to deal with Iran, North Korea, and the Middle East, and to provide real leadership internationally against other enemies we all face, like poverty, HIV/AIDS, and corruption.

In sum, it would help return the United States to a place of pre-eminence in the world and would give us the opportunity to address the very real threats we face in the 21st century.

The bottom line is that we cannot afford to continue down the path the

President has set forth. We face real threats from al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations. Accordingly, we need to strengthen our military, diplomatic, and intelligence capabilities. And we need clear-sighted leadership with policies aimed at confronting that threat and with the credibility to mobilize the support of the American people and the world.

This isn't a choice, it is a necessity.

HIGHER EDUCATION ACT EXTENSION

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I rise today to support the extension of the Higher Education Act. However, I would like to raise two issues.

First, I would have preferred a clean extension of this act as the other extensions have been.

Second, I am concerned about the impact this extension will have on the many other graduate students nationwide who rely on financial assistance, including students at Florida's Nova Southeastern University.

Nova Southeastern University's student body is unique with eighty percent pursuing graduate studies. This is the opposite of typical institutions where 80 percent of students are at the undergraduate level.

Nova holds the distinction of leading the Nation in postgraduate degrees awarded to Hispanic students.

Nova is also the largest originator of School as Lender loans in the country, and thus, is disproportionately affected by changes to the School as Lender Program.

The School as Lender Program allowed Nova to provide hundreds of millions of dollars in low-cost loans to students.

Premiums from the sale of those loans provided the university with millions of dollars annually which it used to educate its students. Nova maintains it helped keep their tuition rates down.

Denying Nova its ability to use these premiums for all students will hurt thousands of Nova students each year.

This extension also eliminates the ability of school lenders and eligible lender trustees to issue low-cost PLUS loans to graduate students. This change could increase the cost of graduate school for many students who need multiple loans to finish their degree.

For these reasons, I am disappointed this is not a clean extension, and I will continue to engage our Senate Education Committee leaders about this issue in the months ahead.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

LANCE CORPORAL PHILIP JOHNSON

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, today I rise to pay tribute to U.S. Marine Corps LCpl Philip A. Johnson, of Enfield, CT, a heroic young man who lost his life serving his country in Iraq on September 2, 2006. He was 19 years old.