

this corruption in their own ministries to get oil production moving and a way to share those oil revenues.

There are those who say: Well, what about supporting our troops? I absolutely do support our troops. And for those troops who are in Iraq, let me say this: Your Congress will not abandon you.

But the best way to support the troops is not to send them on this reckless mission. The best way to support our troops is to bring them home safely and swiftly. That is why I voted against this preemptive war in the first place. In my speech when I was 1 of the 23, I said: We don't know if we will be greeted with flowers or landmines. I said: We shouldn't go to Iraq on our own. We need to go with the world if, in fact, the weapons are there.

Well, from the very beginning, everything the Congress and the American people have been told by this administration has proven not to be so. It has either been an outright lie or dangerously incompetent. The President asked the Congress to vote for a preemptive war because Iraq was supposed to have weapons of mass destruction that posed an imminent danger to the United States. Well, the Congress gave the preemptive authority. However, the weapons of mass destruction were not there.

I say to my colleagues, after all of those troops we sent, weren't you filled with shock and awe to find out there were no weapons?

Then, the administration sent Colin Powell to the United Nations to make the case for war. He is one of the most esteemed Americans in the world, and the Bush administration set him up. Then—CIA Director Tenet said it was going to be a slam dunk. To this day, Colin Powell cries foul about what happened to him at the U.N. How can we trust the data or judgment of an administration that continually gives us this fiasco?

Now, what about President Bush's good friend, Prime Minister Maliki? I listened to my colleague from Texas. He said: Are we giving up on Maliki? The question is, is Maliki giving up on Iraq. Are we cutting the legs out from Maliki? I say no, Maliki's government has no legs. They are not involved in dealing with the corruption, with power sharing. It is the same Maliki who told our U.S. marines they couldn't go into a neighborhood to go after a Shiite cleric called al-Sadr, who bankrolls attacks on American soldiers. Is Maliki an honest broker in Iraq or is he someone who represents the Shiites?

I don't have confidence in what we have been told by this administration, and I have very serious doubts about the will of the administration of Prime Minister Maliki. Make no mistake—and I feel so deeply about this—a great American military cannot be a substitute for a weak Iraqi Government. The stronger we are, the more permission we give the Iraqis to be weak.

We were challenged a few minutes ago to say: Well, what is the alternative? I say let's use the ideas that have come from our commanders, which have now been put aside, the Iraq Study Group, and others within the region. Let's use Baker-Hamilton as a starting point. Let's send in the diplomats before we send in the troops. I don't embrace all of the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, but it is a bipartisan way of going forward. It was not reckless. Once we send in those troops, it is irrevocable. I think we need a new policy, and I think we need a new direction. I think Baker-Hamilton gave us a good direction to pull us together to go in, and I think that is where we need to go.

Let me conclude by saying this: To our outstanding men and women in uniform who are already in Iraq, you have a tough job, and we are proud of you. Neither the Congress nor the American people will ever abandon you. But to those troops who are waiting to head to Iraq, the best way to support you is to say no to the President's reckless, flawed escalation of this war in Iraq.

Again, let's send in the diplomats, not the troops.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senator from Colorado is recognized for 15 minutes.

EVOLVING DISASTER IN COLORADO

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise today to call to the attention of the Members of the Senate an evolving disaster that is occurring in parts of eastern Colorado as well as parts of Nebraska, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Kansas and to concur with statements made earlier this week by my colleague, Senator ROBERTS from Kansas. On Monday, my friend from Kansas stated that he rose to call attention to what can only be described as a major disaster. I agree with Senator ROBERTS, there can be no doubt that we are dealing with a disaster in the West.

Over the last few weeks Colorado and its neighbors have experienced record-setting blizzards. In some parts of Colorado the storms dropped almost 5 feet of snow which has drifted in some cases to a size of 15 feet. I stand about 6 feet 1 inch, so to get some perspective, 5 feet of snow would leave my neck and shoulders just out above the snow. It is tough to get around in and a nightmare if you have to tend to livestock, but that is what folks in Colorado, and in the neighboring States have done. In fact, so much snow has fallen in Baca County down in southeastern Colorado that weather stations that transmit data including snowfall were unable to send information because they were buried under a number of feet of snow.

Let me reiterate that there was so much snow in Baca County that they were unable to measure it. This has

created a horrendous situation for many in the West. Thousands of cattle and other livestock are currently stranded without food or water. Many have died due to the freezing temperatures. I have here a photo of an animal that is caked with several inches of snow. There are ice sickles falling down off of the nose of the animal and off of the underbelly of the animal. This is a hearty animal. Most animals that have suffered this kind of condition would not survive. The reason I point this out to the Members of the Senate is it just shows how ferocious this particular storm was and how serious of an impact it has had on the animals. This doesn't occur unless you have very severe blizzard conditions with lots of snow accompanying it.

The aftermath of these devastating blizzards continues to paralyze many counties in Colorado and the West. Dozens of communities have experienced severe economic damage and loss as a result of these blizzards. These storms have created a dire situation. Thousands of local men and women have banded together and are working to provide relief to their neighbors and to the tens of thousands of livestock facing starvation. In the tradition of the West, local individuals have pulled together and spent much of their holiday season trying to dig each other out and reach stranded livestock.

These storms struck during a time of year when ranchers in Colorado are preparing for the National Western Stock Show, one of the largest stock shows in the world. The stock show is an important opportunity for ranchers to show stock and to make contacts. Now in its 101st year, this year's stock show has seen a marked drop in attendance due to these storms.

A story in the Rocky Mountain News was "No-Show Stock Show." I have received reports that livestock pens are sitting empty at the stock show and that the number of exhibitors is down. This is because the animals that would fill the pens are fighting for their very survival and the ranchers who would typically exhibit simply can't make it because they are trying to save their stock. Folks aren't at the stock show because they are back home trying to help one another deal with the aftermath of these major storms. Locals are trying to do all they can.

I am grateful for the assistance that the National Guard and FEMA have provided. Unfortunately, more help is needed. The vicious combination of blizzards was especially hard on eastern Colorado and the farmers and ranchers who call this part of Colorado home.

The part of Colorado hardest hit by these blizzards is also one of the most important agricultural regions in our Nation and is an epicenter for cattle production. Ranchers in this part of the State are currently racing against time in an attempt to locate cattle that have been stranded without feed or water. Unfortunately, as each day

goes by, the death toll increases. I have confirmed reports that the livestock loss has already reached into the thousands, and the tally is steadily growing.

I have a photo that reflects how devastatingly some of the herds have been impacted. We have live cattle back here, and down here dead cattle. This photo reflects how all the cattle bunched together for warmth during the storm, and as a result, we have dead animals clustered together down here in this lower part of the photo that I bring to the Senate. It is a gruesome scene. This loss will have a very severe economic impact on this particular farmer and rancher. Unfortunately farmers and ranchers all over the State of Colorado and our neighbors to the east are facing similar situations.

I grew up on a ranch, and I know all too well when your livestock is threatened, then so is your livelihood. Indications are that a tragic scene is developing in Colorado as cattle succumb to the elements due to a lack of food or a lack of water or from extreme exposure.

Colorado's Governor has declared a state of emergency and has requested help from the Federal Government. I support this request and have transmitted my support for Federal aid to the White House. On Sunday, President Bush made an official emergency declaration for parts of Colorado. I am thankful for the President's attention to this crisis and the time he and his staff put in on this situation, working through the weekend to help Colorado producers. By signing this declaration on Sunday night, the President showed that he is a man familiar with ranching and understands how devastating this situation is for rural Colorado.

The efforts of the President freed up valued aid from FEMA for snow removal for which I am grateful. As you can see from this particular picture, we have a roof that collapsed from the weight of the snow. It is just part of the picture, but I think it again reflects how the utilities and the infrastructure in areas of Colorado have been impacted. These impacts include the closure major highways and one of the country's busiest airports. I am grateful for the aid from FEMA. Local officials have been offering aid from the start and others from their office have swarmed to Colorado to offer assistance. They have a temporary headquarters set up in a Holiday Inn off the highway. Even in these less-than-ideal conditions, they are committed to helping folks in Colorado. This photo depicts the need, it shows a roof that collapsed from the weight of the snow.

Last night I was informed by FEMA officials that upon receipt of appropriate paperwork from Colorado, up to six additional counties could be eligible for assistance. Those counties that could be added to the President's original emergency declaration are Baca, Bent, Crowley, El Paso, Prowers, and

Pueblo Counties. In the coming days and weeks, I will continue to work the FEMA officials to see if other Colorado counties will be eligible. We appreciate the assistance FEMA has provided and their continued efforts.

One of the most pressing matters that needs to be addressed is livestock aid. We desperately need aid for livestock rescue and recovery. The need for livestock aid becomes more pressing with each passing minute. I am hopeful that short-term relief will be forthcoming very soon.

To address this need in the long term I have introduced a bill with colleagues from other affected States. The Livestock Assistance Act of 2007 will provide aid to farmers and ranchers for livestock recovery and assistance to help cover the costs of the livestock losses created by these storms. I am hopeful that my colleagues in the Senate can appreciate the vital nature of this bill and act quickly on it. As I stand here today, another storm is on its way to Colorado, bringing Arctic cold and a prediction of up to another foot of snow. We are in a tough spot out West, and I ask that all necessary Federal resources be made available to Colorado and other Western States suffering the devastation brought on by these historic storms.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I yield myself 10 minutes of the time controlled by the majority. I ask unanimous consent that Senator JACK REED be recognized for 10 minutes at the conclusion of my remarks.

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

TIME FOR A CHANGE

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, on November 7, the voters in Maryland and all around the Nation voted for change. Ten new Senators were elected to this body, six defeating incumbents.

After serving the people of Maryland for 20 years in the House of Representatives, I am honored that they have sent me here, to the other side of the Capitol, where I will continue to fight on their behalf.

The voters in Maryland and across the Nation sent a clear message on November 7: It's time for a change.

Our constituents want things done differently in Washington. They want their interests put before the special interests.

Therefore, it is appropriate that the Senate's first order of business is ethics legislation that will bring greater transparency and fairness to the political process in Washington and help restore the American people's confidence in their Government.

The American people also called for a reordering of our priorities. They want Congress to respond to the needs of

families fighting for the American dream.

They want their children to have a better chance at that dream, and they know that achieving it is impossible without stronger communities, access to quality health care, and better educational opportunities. They want to raise their families in an energy-independent Nation with cleaner air and water. They want a country that respects the rights of all, and that celebrates and embraces our diversity.

But the loudest cry in November was the call for a change in our policies in Iraq. Americans overwhelmingly want to see our troops begin to come home and they don't want to see thousands of additional troops go to Iraq.

Iraq is a country today torn by civil war. Victory in Iraq will not be achieved with our military might. It will come only from successfully aiding Iraq in establishing a government that protects the rights and enjoys the confidence of all its people. It must be a government that respects both human rights and democratic principles. The efforts of U.S. soldiers, no matter how heroic, cannot accomplish these objectives for the Iraqis.

For 4 years, our soldiers have helped the Iraqis in ousting Saddam Hussein, providing security to the country and advising and training Iraqi security forces.

Our soldiers have performed their responsibility with bravery and devotion to their country. We honor their service. More than 3,000 soldiers have made the ultimate sacrifice and many more have suffered life-changing injuries.

It is well past time for a change in strategy in Iraq. The circumstances on the ground are worsening. Last June, I laid out a plan for success in Iraq. It started with reducing our combat troop levels and having the Iraqis take greater responsibility for the defense of their own country. It stressed the need for diplomatic and political solutions—with the international community engaged in negotiating a cease fire with the warring militias.

I called on greater support from our allies in helping us to train the Iraqi security forces.

And last June, I spoke about the need for a negotiated government in Iraq that would represent all of its ethnic people—Sunnis, Shia and Kurds.

Last month, the Iraq Study Group came forward with similar recommendations—highlighting the need for the President to start drawing down troops. Many military experts agree, including some of our generals on the ground.

As GEN George Casey recently said:

It's always been my view that a heavy and sustained American military presence was not going to solve the problems in Iraq over the long term.

On November 7, the American people told us that they too agree that it's time for a change in Iraq.

So when President Bush said several weeks ago that he was reevaluating the