We only have time for a relatively few items to be completed, in my opinion. Some of them are more fairly obvious and some are quite important. Obviously, we have to complete homeland security. We have been on that bill now, I believe, 3 weeks. Hopefully, we will finish it very soon. Because of the time, it needs to be completed soon.

Quite frankly, we find ourselves in a delay, a stalling arrangement here that is not where we need to be. Are there differences of views? Of course, and they need to be resolved, but that is what the system is about, and we need to go on.

We are going to be faced very soon with a resolution with respect to Iraq. In fact, we are working on it now. It is an issue that needs to be addressed and addressed quickly. Again, it will take a certain amount of time, but we do need to address it, and we need to address it on the basis that it is a priority with which we need to deal, however one feels about it.

Defense appropriations: We are going to find ourselves not having dealt with more than half the appropriations bills by the time we go into recess, but many of them can probably be tided over for several months with a continuing resolution, funding the agencies at the level they have been in the past year. It is not an unusual occurrence. But Defense appropriations, in this instance, is quite different because of the circumstances relating to terrorism.

Defense appropriations need to be completed. More resources obviously need to be available to our military so when we ask our military to do whatever we ask them to do, they have the best support we can possibly give to them.

The CR needs to be dealt with so we do not have the Government being stopped because of no financing. Remember, we did that a number of years ago. We cannot let that happen, of course.

There are lots of issues people will talk about that indeed are important, and if we had our way, they could all be done. Unfortunately, a lot of those issues have not been brought out of committee and to the floor so we can move them forward. I believe 8 out of 13 appropriations bills have not been dealt with yet.

We are going to soon have to deal with a payback for Medicare. I find at home—and I am sure everyone else does, too—more physicians are not treating Medicare patients because the reimbursement has gone down, and it is scheduled to go down more the first of next month. Frankly, this would be a relatively easy issue to fix. We know what the percentages are, and we could do something about that.

An issue that I have talked a great deal about and that is more difficult—and I do not think we will accomplish but many of us would like to—is pharmaceuticals. We need to find a way to make pharmaceuticals more available to the elderly particularly. We have worked on that a great deal and have not come to a conclusion and will not, in my opinion, by the time this session is over.

We have spent a good deal of time on energy. Certainly, energy is an issue that affects not only the economy but it affects terrorism and the upheaval in the Middle East where we have let ourselves become 60 percent dependent on imported energy. We need to change that. We need to have a policy. We have not had a policy for some time. We are now in the process of developing that policy in a conference committee, and we need to get that finished.

We talked about drought relief. It is on the table. We can do that.

Unfortunately, we will probably not be able to deal with terrorism insurance, which is too bad. It is a good issue because it has to do with the economy. It has to do with the resistance to constructing buildings, for example, when you cannot have insurance for them.

There are lots of other issues, such as tort reform and health care costs. I think we have to move on those issues. We have to move ahead with the budget resolution, which we have not had for the first time in a number of years.

One may say, what is the difference? The difference is not only does it help us deal with what we are going to spend, but it has an operational aspect to it that says if you spend over what you have agreed to for the budget, there have to be 60 votes to pass it, which is the kind of resistance we need when we are spending too much money.

We have already talked about prescription drugs. That is an issue we really need to deal with. There are a number of ideas, and we need to consider them.

The permanent tax cut, of course, again, has to do with stimulating the economy, and we have talked about that a great deal as something we need to do.

There are also the issues of homeland security and welfare reform. Welfare reform is pretty much ready to go in the committee. We are going to have to have a temporary passage to keep that in place because it expires shortly. These are the things we need to deal with, as well as the appropriations bills.

I urge that we set some priorities, decide what it is we are going to do over this time, and set some time goals so we can work at it. Then I think we really have to enforce it.

Today, for example, it will be 5 o'clock on a Monday before we get around to voting, and I suspect we will be out again next Friday. The time has come when we really need to take the time that is available to do what we have to do. That is our challenge, and certainly it is not easy.

It is difficult because we all have different ideas about what issues are most important. We have some compelling issues that clearly need to be moved on because of the shortage of time. I urge we move that way and complete the work that is necessary for it to be done before we leave in October.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona.

THINNING THE FORESTS

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, in the time I have this afternoon, I want to address three subjects. The first relates to an issue we are going to be taking up tonight, which is the cloture motion on an amendment relating to the Interior appropriations bill. The Domenici-Craig amendment dealing with forest health will go down if cloture is invoked. Therefore, I urge my colleagues not to vote to invoke cloture.

I also acknowledge that the efforts to try to reach a compromise on how to protect our forests from disease, infestation, poor health, and fire have not borne fruit, and it is unlikely there will be an agreement reached in a bipartisan way sufficient to allow us to pass something that will provide relief to those, particularly in the West, who have forests that need this kind of treatment. That being the case, we are going to have to find another way to deal with the issue.

The administration is committed to forest health. The President has laid out a plan, and I think administratively the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture will do the very best they can to work within the existing law to manage our forests to bring them back to health and to prevent fires.

The reality is that this failure to reach an agreement will have disastrous consequences, not just in terms of fire but the health of our forests, particularly in the West, and that is not a situation we should be very proud of in this body.

We tried very hard, particularly those of us who represent the Western States, to educate some of our colleagues about what we mean by forest management. There is not much debate in the scientific community about what ought to be done to our forests, maybe 75 million acres of trees. They need to be treated, and by that we mean there needs to be a process whereby the dead, dying, and diseased timber, as well as the very small diameter timber, is removed so the forest can sustain the larger trees we want to preserve and return forests to the healthy conditions they were in maybe about 100 years ago. This means opening up the canopies and providing more opportunity for grass. The trees that would be thinned would not only remove a source of competition to the larger trees in terms of soaking up the moisture and nutrients from the soil, but also providing fuel for forest fires which, instead of just creeping along the ground as they did 100 years or so ago, are now using these small trees to basically climb a ladder up to the crowns of the big trees.

What we see on television, when we see the pictures of these enormous forest fires, is the canopies of the big trees literally superheating and then exploding into flame, and this is what spreads the fire for miles and miles.

If the dead and dying fuel on the forest floor is removed, the down fuel as well as those small-diameter trees that are literally choking the forests to death right now, it is not only opened up for the trees and other flora and fauna that we want to grow properly but it also removes a significant fire danger. That is what the scientific community understands needs to be done.

The problem is that there are radical environmentalists who do not want to see this done. Ironically, our goal is the same: To protect those beautiful big trees and to create a healthy environment for all of the other flora and fauna. But they are so afraid that a timber industry will be either preserved or regenerated, and that that timber industry will soon set its sights on cutting the big trees as well, that they are really willing to cut off their nose to spite their face; that is to say, to risk the health of the entire forest in order that a timber industry is not encouraged to take hold.

In my State of Arizona, there is not any more timber industry, so we are not interested in bringing an industry back. It is gone. There are a couple of small mills that can take small-diameter timber and make 2 by 4's and fiberboard. The White Mountain Apache Indian Tribe has two small mills that can handle larger diameter timber which they cut on their reservation.

But this is not about creating a timber industry in Arizona. It is not about logging. We are not going to have logging as we used to know it. It is about companies being permitted to do the Government's work of cleaning out the forests and making a little bit of profit. They are not going to do it for free. We do not have enough money in the budget to pay the cost of doing that. They have to be willing to do it for the small amount of money they can make on the products they are now permitted to sell.

That is what this debate has been all about, and I am very discouraged that the radical environmental movement has such a stranglehold on some politicians that even though they will privately tell us they understand the scientists are right, that we do need to go in and manage our forests, they are not willing to confront these people in an open forum. It has been an interesting one-sided debate we have had in the Senate. No one has defended the other position. The reason is because it is indefensible. It boils down to a political issue. That is too bad for the forests.

I understand what happens when we are not able to reach agreement. We are not going to be able to get 60 votes to carry the day. As a result, we have to find another way to do this. Therefore, depending upon what the assistant majority leader and others decide to do at the end of the day, that issue may well be behind us as of tonight as something we will deal with in the Senate. That is too bad. We should have been able to deal with that.

I add a postscript before I turn to the next subject. Some on my side of the aisle have criticized the majority leader because he was able to secure in an appropriations bill special relief for his home State of South Dakota and the Black Hills by doing exactly what we are talking about, thinning those forests. He did that by, in effect, waiving all environmental considerations. In other words, the legislation provided the sufficiency for environmental achievement and nothing further was required to clean up these forests.

There was criticism. I suppose one could criticize the use of the process in the way that he did but frankly, I cannot criticize what he was attempting to achieve and what will be achieved as a result of his actions. The Black Hills are some of my favorite forests in this country. I used to vacation there as a young boy. I love the Black Hills. I am glad the majority leader saw fit to save the Black Hills. I wish we could apply something close to that same management technique for the rest of the country's forests. I find it ironic people would permit it to be done in this one area, which I support, but nowhere else.

I hope we can find a way to address this in the future, put the politics behind us, and get back to a scientific resolution of the issue.

IRAQ

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, the second subject I address is a resolution the White House has sent Congress for consideration of Presidential authority to deal with the problem of Iraq. There have been questions raised this weekend about the language of the resolution and the need, in some people's minds, to define it and provide greater definition.

My own view is the President and his administration did a very good job at crafting a resolution which will give the President the authority he needs to do the things we understand have to be done. I am a little worried about trying to be too cute in drafting language that will constrain the President in a variety of ways, not because we do not want to know what the President has in mind, but because we do not want to come back to the Congress every time the President needs some additional component of authority in fighting this war on terror.

The immediate need is to grant the authority to follow up on the resolutions that were violated by Saddam Hussein, and that if the United Nations is not going to take action, and it is not, then for the United States to be able to do that. We will pass that resolution by a fairly wide margin both in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. I am hoping Members of this body will not view it necessary to draft the language in such a way that it puts the interests of the United States behind the authority of the United Nations.

The U.S. Government and those who represent the people of America will act on behalf of the security interests of the American people. That ought to be our first objective, not to try to resurrect the good reputation of the United Nations, not to put the U.S. position in a subservient role to the Security Council of the United Nations, and not to subject our decisionmaking or the President's authority to act to approval first of a body in the United Nations.

I therefore urge my colleagues not to succumb to the temptation of inserting language which would submit first to the United Nations and then the U.S. Congress.

It was my understanding—perhaps I should have asked unanimous consent before I began to speak—that I would be allotted 20 minutes, 10 minutes beyond the usual time.

Mr. REID. We have a limited amount of time. We have Democrats that need to speak.

I am sorry, but I have to object.

Mr. KYL. Might I then have 30 seconds to explain that I had been told that I would have 20 minutes, and I have calibrated my remarks to reflect that? I regret I will not be able to finish these remarks.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I apologize to the Senator. We on this side have speakers who wish to speak. If the entire allotted time is not used—I think it will be; we have our time allotted—perhaps the Senator wants to wait around to see if Democrats show up when they are supposed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair observes that the minority controls 8 minute 16 seconds.

Mr. DOMENICI. I ask that the Senator from New Mexico be allocated the 8 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator may proceed.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, fellow Senators, I will not get a chance today to accomplish what I intend to accomplish. I assure those who are listening they will not have to wait long to get the rest of it because as we get time this week, we will start talking a little bit.

The majority side, led by the majority leader and the chairman of the Budget Committee, last week took to the floor one or two times with lengthy discussions about the American economy, with comments by each of them about who was to blame for the economic shortcomings that exist today.

I start with the economic downturn. Many Members and a few Americans remember the name Joseph Stiglitz. He was chairman of President Clinton's