

The fuel that we are increasingly talking about, which is probably the most dramatic when we look at the challenges before us, is natural gas. Natural gas is another energy source we depend on heavily and another area in which we are becoming increasingly reliant on imports. Because natural gas is clean burning and relatively cheap, it has become the fuel of choice for new electric power generation in recent years. Sixty percent of homes across America are heated and cooled today with natural gas.

While demand has been steadily growing, and for good reason, domestic supply has remained relatively flat. In fact, in 2003, we imported 15 percent of the gas we used but by 2025 the percent of gas that is used that will be imported is going to go up twofold, is going to double. Yes, we need to take bold action in the United States to address America's energy challenges, and we need to do this head on. We are doing that on the Senate floor.

The Energy bill we are debating over these 2 weeks is a strong step in the right direction. I hope that we will be able to continue to work together to pass a strong and bipartisan bill so we can get this important legislation to the President of the United States so that he can sign it.

America needs this policy. It needs this policy to keep our families safe, strong, and secure. We need a policy that keeps us competitive, and we need a policy that continues to help us to move forward.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

BOLTON NOMINATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, from the outset of the debate on John Bolton's nomination, Senate Democrats have had a clear and consistent position. If the administration works in good faith to give the Senate the information it deserves, the Senate Democrats are ready to immediately give this nomination an up-or-down vote. We said this as far back as April, and it remains our position today. Despite the administration's refusal to turn over any of the requested information during this time period, Senator FRIST told me yesterday he was inclined to seek another vote on the Bolton nomination. While the majority leader is certainly within his rights to do this, unless the administration changes course before this vote is held, the outcome will be exactly the same as it was last month and may even have less support than it did before.

Here is why: The history and precedent in the Senate makes it clear the Senate has a right to information that bears directly on the fitness of a polit-

ical nominee to serve. Virtually every other administration has recognized the Senate's rights and provided the needed information—every administration, that is, except this one. Many colleagues on the majority have stood for the Senate's right to get information from the executive branch in the past. We have many statements on record to that effect. These colleagues have made it clear, with their words and deeds, that it was perfectly legitimate for the Senate to withhold action on an executive nominee until the executive branch provided certain information, even if the information requested had nothing to do with the nominee in question.

In this instance, we are seeking information that bears directly on the fitness of John Bolton to serve as our representative to the United Nations. We are not engaging in any fishing expedition. We are seeking clearly defined documents and information about two very important issues:

No. 1, did Bolton attempt to exaggerate what Congress would be told about Syria's alleged weapons of mass destruction capabilities? Remember, we have some experience in weapons of mass destruction information being altered and manipulated.

No. 2, did Bolton use and perhaps misuse highly classified intelligence intercepts to spy on bureaucratic rivals who disagreed with his views or for other inappropriate purposes?

These are two very direct, simple issues that bear on this man's capability and fitness to serve in the United Nations.

The administration's position on these requests has been that political appointees are qualified to see this information but that Senators elected by the American people are not. I believe this is unacceptable.

During this impasse, Senate Democrats have repeatedly demonstrated our good faith to break the current impasse and give Mr. Bolton a vote. Yesterday, I heard some of my Republican colleagues assert that Democrats have been shifting the goalpost on resolving this issue, and they are absolutely right, we have. Instead of having a 100-yard football field, now we have made it only 60 yards. We have moved in their direction. Just last week, Senators BIDEN, ranking member of Foreign Relations and, of course, Senator DODD, the ranking member of the Rules Committee, made another effort to resolve the impasse over the Bolton nomination. Everyone in the Senate and outside this body should understand that this offer moves significantly away from our initial request in a sincere effort to resolve the situation. Everyone should also understand that, unfortunately, this latest effort to reach an accommodation with the White House has apparently met the same fate as previous efforts to work things out—silence from the administration.

Even yesterday, the ranking member of the Finance Committee—I should

say the vice chair Senator ROCKEFELLER of West Virginia, which is the proper title—offered his assistance, to break the impasse. He sent a letter to the Director of National Intelligence, John Negroponte, to that effect.

We have said publicly, if this administration, similar to every other administration, respects the requests of the Senate, we will immediately move to grant Bolton an up-or-down vote. I stand by that pledge today. I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will recognize we are following their precedent with our actions today. I hope this administration brings an end to its pattern of abusing its powers and treats this coequal branch of Government with the respect it deserves.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VITTER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

ENERGY POLICY ACT OF 2005

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 6, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6) to ensure jobs for our future with secure, affordable and reliable energy.

Pending:

Domenici amendment No. 779 (to amendment No. 775), to eliminate methyl tertiary butyl ether from the United States fuel supply, to increase production and use of renewable fuel, and to increase the Nation's energy independence.

Schumer amendment No. 782 (to amendment No. 779), to strike the reliable fuels subtitle of the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I believe the order of business is my second-degree amendment to the amendment of my friend from New Mexico.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is the pending question.

Mr. SCHUMER. When do we expect a vote, Mr. President? What is the order of business here?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We do not yet have a consent request. We are expecting that soon.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I will address this amendment. Let me say, this amendment is one that still requires all the Clean Air standards to be met but removes the ethanol mandate. That is what this amendment does.

The underlying Domenici amendment on ethanol is so wrong. The amendment is a boondoggle. It hurts drivers and it hurts the free market. It is a boondoggle because it takes money out of the pockets of drivers and puts it into the pockets of the big ethanol producers.