

and too little. We lost American soldiers' lives and many were injured because we did not have the right equipment in place.

So now what we are saying is that this administration must be held accountable, to report to Congress every 90 days to tell us in Congress the progress that is being made in protecting our troops, in preparing the Iraqis to defend their own country, in moving that country toward stability, and in moving us to the point where American soldiers can start coming home. That was passed yesterday, 79 to 19.

As the President stood on Veterans Day and in an unprecedented political speech attacked his Democratic critics for saying they did not agree with his war policy, this Senate, on a bipartisan basis yesterday, 79 to 19, said to the President: Your policy in Iraq must change. We need to start looking to bring American soldiers home. And 2006 is the year to begin that process in earnest.

That is why it was a historic vote. Of course, as we look at the statements made in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq, there is a recurring theme. It turns out that the major sources of intelligence that were passing through the administration and to the American people were passing across the desk of Vice President CHENEY.

Lieutenant Colonel Wilkerson, chief of staff to Secretary of State Colin Powell, referred to a cabal, a cabal led by Vice President CHENEY and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, a cabal which set the stage for the invasion of Iraq. The man speaking was not a partisan Democrat. He was the chief of staff to the Secretary of State in the Bush administration, Colin Powell. I think it makes clear that throughout the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq, our Vice President, RICHARD CHENEY, was making statements that did not reflect the truth of what was occurring in Iraq.

Repeatedly, he said Iraq had links to al-Qaida, and that was proven false. Repeatedly, he said Iraq was an imminent threat to the United States, and that was proven false. Repeatedly, Vice President CHENEY said Iraq was trying to acquire nuclear weapons, and that was proven false.

On "Meet the Press," on March 16, 2003, the Vice President said: "And we believe he [Saddam Hussein] has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons." False.

In addition, there were statements made about whether Iraq was trying to acquire uranium from Africa, statements made by the Vice President which turned out to be false, and statements, of course, relative to aluminum tubes. I knew something about that debate because as a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, I listened as the Department of Defense and the Department of Energy debated whether these aluminum tubes were really all about nuclear weapons. There was a

real division within the administration, and I would walk outside the Senate Intelligence Committee room and hear statements made by the Vice President saying: There is no debate. It is all about nuclear weapons.

Now, I could not repeat what I had heard in the Senate Intelligence Committee. I was prohibited from saying it publicly. I knew what he said was false. It is one of the reasons I voted against that resolution to go to war in Iraq.

But again and again the Vice President was taking information, intelligence information, giving it to the American people selectively, making certain that it was always the strongest spin toward the immediate need for a war, and that is how we ended up in the position we are in today.

It is a lot easier to get into a war than it is to get out of one. And we have learned that with the cost in human lives and the cost to America's Treasury.

#### AMERICA'S ENERGY CRISIS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the second story on the front pages of this morning's newspapers relates to the energy crisis in America. You do not have to describe that to any American who has filled up their gas tank in the last several months. And in the weeks ahead, when you start paying your home heating bills, if you live in one of the colder parts of America, you will see the energy problems we are facing.

Of course, it reflects the fact we have no energy policy in this country. In the White House, with the President and Vice President, we have two men who have long careers with the energy industries and with oil companies, and the energy policy they are pushing reflects it.

What did we have in the so-called Energy bill signed by the President just in August of this year? A \$9 billion subsidy to oil companies, a \$9 billion subsidy to companies which are realizing record-breaking profits at this very moment.

Why in the world would we be sending subsidies, Federal taxpayers' dollars, to these oil companies at a moment in time when they are realizing the largest profits in history? I think every American knows why. When you go to the gas station to fill up your car or your truck, and you put that charge on your credit card, the money from your credit card is going directly to the boardrooms of these oil companies that are realizing more money than they ever have in history.

We wanted to know who wrote the administration's energy bill, and we could not find out. Neither the President nor the Vice President, who was leading the effort to create this energy policy, would tell the American people who was part of it.

This morning's front page story in the Washington Post tells us who was part of it. A document obtained by the Washington Post this week shows that

officials from ExxonMobil, Conoco before its merger with Phillips, Shell Oil, and BP America met in the White House complex with Cheney aides who were developing the national energy policy, parts of which became law and parts of which are still being debated.

It comes as no surprise. We suspected as much. A lawsuit was filed to specifically determine whether the oil company executives wrote this Energy bill. That lawsuit was fought all the way to the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court ruled that the White House didn't have to tell the American people who was involved. Now this memo tells us.

The reason it is important is that last week the executives of these oil companies came before Congress. You probably heard about the hearing before the Senate Commerce Committee. Senator Maria Cantwell of Washington insisted that these oil company executives be sworn in and testify under oath, as the tobacco company executives did a few years ago. But Senator STEVENS, chairman of the committee, refused to allow them to be sworn in. Why? So they couldn't be held accountable if they didn't tell the truth.

Unfortunately, some of the statements made in responses to questions by Senator LAUTENBERG raised serious questions as to whether those oil company executives were candid and forthcoming in terms of their involvement in this very bill, the Energy bill, which this memorandum tells us was prepared with the oil company executives. Once again, the special interests trumped America's families and consumers, businesses and farmers. The Energy bill was written with the Vice President's direction that rewarded oil companies at a time when we should have been sensitive to protecting American consumers. Unfortunately, it reflects what has been happening in this capital for too long.

#### LEWIS LIBBY INDICTMENT

Mr. DURBIN. The third issue is one which everyone is aware of; that is, the fact that for the first time in over a century, some high-level staffer in the White House has been indicted. Lewis "Scooter" Libby was indicted a few weeks ago, charged with perjury and obstruction of justice related to the Valerie Plame affair. Everyone is aware of it now. Joe Wilson, former Ambassador, sent to Africa to determine whether assertions by the administration about yellow cake uranium coming from Africa to Iraq were true, reached the conclusion they were not. When he published that conclusion, he was attacked in the press by Robert Novak in a column where Mr. Novak said two White House sources had told him that Joseph Wilson's wife Valerie Plame was a CIA agent.

In fact, she was an undercover agent whose identity was being protected. But the White House, in an effort to discredit its critics and to silence