

everything possible to prevent the kind of excesses we have seen with AIG.

As a condition of providing financing to General Motors and Chrysler, the Treasury Department required the automakers to renegotiate their collective bargaining agreements with their workers. In order for their employers to get loans from the Treasury, auto-workers gave up cost-of-living increases to their wages and bonuses, among other benefits. It is our obligation, as we did with General Motors and Chrysler, to protect taxpayer dollars. That is why, in January of this year, I voted against releasing an additional \$350 billion in TARP funding. I opposed the release of this funding because I believed we did not have adequate accounting of the money the United States had already spent in the bailout. At the time I said: We need legislation to enhance transparency and to enhance taxpayer protections before we release additional money.

Earlier this year, Senator DORGAN introduced the Taxpayer Protection Act, something I quickly signed on to as a cosponsor. This legislation is designed to limit executive compensation, to prohibit the kinds of bonuses companies such as AIG, which have received Federal economic assistance, can provide to their employees or their executives. Today we are reminded that the use of taxpayer money should be held to the highest standards of transparency and accountability.

I am hopeful this administration—and we have heard the President say he is committed to doing something about the situation at AIG, and we know this Senate is committed to doing something about the situation at AIG with their executive bonuses—and this body will take the appropriate action to recover the taxpayer dollars AIG has so recklessly spent on bonuses. I intend to do everything I can to support those efforts.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

#### FISCAL IRRESPONSIBILITY

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, it is my understanding we are confined to 10 minutes during this timeframe. I will do so, although after listening to the presentation of the Senator from Rhode Island, I wish I had a little bit more time. It is mind-boggling that anyone in this country would look at the budget as put forth by this administration and the spending in the omnibus bill of \$410 billion and the deficit for this year of \$1.75 trillion, the \$787 billion stimulus, as well as the national debt which, projecting forward 5 years, will double under this administration, if the President is successful in getting this spending done, and will triple in 10 years—it is going to be difficult for any Senator to stand and say there is anything fiscally responsible about the behavior of our current President. If you don't believe it, turn

on the TV and watch all the tea parties going on around the country. The people understand. They know the level of spending and how outrageous it is.

#### SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, today is a very significant day. Right now we are actually looking at the sixth anniversary of the Operation Iraqi Freedom. We sometimes have forgotten about the butcher from Iraq and how bad that was. I had personal experience during the first Gulf War of being there and seeing some of the things that went on, the horrible torture and the things that this particular dictator had done to that country. When we went in 6 years ago, it was a very difficult time because we went in with a military that had been downgraded during the Clinton administration. If you take a straight line in terms of what the expenditures were the day he took office, that is how much we reduced it in force strength, in our modernization program. In fact, this euphoric attitude people were talking about, saying the Cold War is over, we no longer need a strong military, that is the environment we had. I think, under those circumstances, we did an incredible job.

I have never been so impressed with an all-volunteer Army. I happen to have been a product of the draft. I believed that offered more discipline. When I went there—and I honestly believe I have made more trips to Iraq and Afghanistan than any other Member as the second-ranking member of the Armed Services Committee—I was privileged to be in places such as Fallujah during all the elections that took place and to see our young people, not all that well equipped, take on difficult odds. The marines in Fallujah were part of this, and it was incredible to watch. It was more than the World War II door-to-door style of combat.

Then I was very proud to be a part of the training of the troops over in Afghanistan. I say that because it was Oklahoma's 45th Division that was involved in training the Afghans on how to train themselves in the A&A. I feel that to have witnessed this, to have been over there in Bagdad, in Kabal, in that whole theater during this time was so impressive to me.

I can remember going into the various mess halls, with our troops there—and at that time, IEDs, at an unprecedented rate, were killing and maiming our soldiers—and the bravery they had. One of the questions they used to ask me, in the early stages of this war—6 years ago and 5 years ago—was: Why is it the American people do not understand what we are doing here? Why don't they understand if we do not stop the terrorism here, it is going to be back at our borders the way it was on 9/11? My response to them was I think they are. We are not getting good reporting out of the media. That started changing as improvements came along.

As I witnessed the opportunities that were there, our troops, all of a sudden, during this surge anyway, were gaining a lot more support, and that completely turned it around. GEN David Petraeus did a remarkable job. In fact, all our generals over there did.

So I think it is incumbent upon us today to remember this is the 6th year. This is something that was absolutely necessary for the safety and the freedom we enjoy here in this country. We should be applauding all our troops as they come back.

To me, it was a little unconscionable, just 3 or 4 days ago, when the White House was coming out with a program that would have impaired our wounded veterans coming back from Iraq and the Middle East from access to VA health care. Because of all the people—I am sure the phones are ringing off the hook at the White House—last night they backed away from that. But, nonetheless, we are not getting the support we should be getting now for our military at this time.

Keep in mind, if we went through an 8-year period of dropping down the support, and then we look at the budget that is in today, it is an inflated budget in spending in every possible area except defense. I think it should be our priority now, as we remember what happened 6 years ago today.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I come to the floor to discuss for a few minutes with my colleague from South Carolina the issue of climate change.

We all know the budget will be forthcoming. We already understand there will be some \$650 billion included in the budget for general revenues that would go as revenues from climate—here it is: \$646 billion over 8 years. According to some aides to the administration, it could be as much as \$2 trillion. Remarkable.

What we have done is we have gone from an attempt to address the issue of climate change through cap and trade to just generating \$680 billion or \$2 trillion without a trace of bipartisanship, without any consultation, without discussions. What we have done on the issue of climate change, by basically funneling \$680-some billion, is we have destroyed any chance of bipartisanship, and the administration is proposing a plan which will have a crippling effect in a bad economy on, particularly, parts of the country and lower income residents in the South and Midwest.

First of all, if we are going to do cap and trade, we should have generous allowances for people who are now operating under certain greenhouse gas emission conditions.

Second of all, any money, any revenues that are gained through cap and trade clearly should not go to just "general revenues." Any funding